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THE HISTORY OF

THE

CHURCH OF CHRIST.

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VOLUME THE FIFTH:

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CONTAINING

A CONTINUATION OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

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EDITED ON THE PLAN AND IN PART FROM THE MSS.

OF THE LATE

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REVD. JOSEPH MILNER, A.M.

BY THE

REVD. ISAAC MILNER, D.D. F.R.S.

DEAN OF CARLISLE,

AND PRESIDENT OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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PREFACE.

A FULL conviction, that in our times the principles and motives of Luther are not well understood, induced me to bring forward, in the preceding Volume, a number of authentic documents, which have been either entirely omitted, or imperfectly stated, by Historians. The approbation with which my endeavours to elucidate this part of Ecclesiastical history have been received, has encouraged me to spare no pains in attempting to place in its true light the character of the Saxon Reformer; and though the Reader may at first be surprised that a volume of so many pages should bring down this History of the Church of Christ only to the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, I have no fear that, when he has perused the work, he will think either the writer prolix, or the matter unimportant.

A mere cursory inspection of the Volume will convince him, that every Chapter contains materials which distinguish this History from all others.

In order to communicate a full and faithful exhibition of facts, the Author has availed himself of all the means of information within his reach; and particularly of the curious and instructive contents of three quarto volumes of the Private Letters of Luther; two of which he in vain sought after, for several years, both in these Dominions and on the Continent.

The learned Dr. Mosheim, in his Compendium, refers to a long list of eminent Authors, who, he says, are to be consulted, in confirmation of his brief statements*. Now such an intimation appears to me, to have the effect of at once overwhelming the courage and resolution of any ordinary student of Ecclesiastical history.

The Historian of the Church of Christ, in several instances of difficult and important inquiry, cannot exactly follow any one of the numerous Authors who have handled the points in question; and to have always detailed his reasons for dissent, would have swelled the Volume too much. He constantly, however, refers to the very pages where the best opinions and the original records are to be found; and then leaves it to his Reader to judge how far he has made legitimate use of the collective evidence. And though this may not be the best way of sheltering himself from the detection of erroneous judgment, or of mis-statement

* Laur. Mosh. Historia Reform. p. 646.

of facts, it certainly contributes to the discovery of truth, by rendering future examination and criticism more easy and agreeable.

Add, that a strict and continued attention to the opinions of contemporary writers, and, whenever they can be procured, to original documents, requires great labour and perseverance; as any one may soon convince himself, who will take the trouble, only in one or two cases, to turn to the numerous passages referred to in this Volume. The writer has no scruple to affirm, that he could have finished the Volume in one-fourth of the time, had he contented himself with less accurate investigations; had he ventured to give general and bold representations of things, and guarded these afterwards (as is often done) by sceptical concessions and plausible conjectures, which, while they save the time and trouble of patient research, serve rather to perplex than to unfold the truth; and all this under great appearances of candour and impartiality.

TRUE candour consists in forming just decisions upon evidences collected with diligence and judgment. It never tempts a man to descant, with specious parade, on liberality and moderation, to depress or dilute virtues, to lessen or palliate vices, and to say and unsay, till all manly and worthy sentiments are utterly lost in a confusion of opposite or incongruous assertions.

The modern taste, I fear, too much encourages a tendency to FALSE candour.

Some Authors of eminence, make NO mention of their authorities; and much may be said for this practice. Perhaps it is preferable to a vague and general reference. My experience entirely agrees with that of the late Mr. C. J. Fox, who says, he found it one of his greatest difficulties to discover the authorities upon which Historians advance their facts*. To this day, notwithstanding the general reference of Dr. Mosheim, I search in vain for the grounds of several of his most positive assertions.

The Preface to the Fourth Volume might supersede the necessity of further remark. But as the times are awful, and as questions concerning the nature of the Roman Catholic Religion are revived, it may be useful to observe, that they who wish to acquire a thorough knowledge of what Popery WAS, will do well to study carefully the history of the first twelve or thirteen years of the Lutheran opposition to the established hierarchy. By this PRACTICAL method, they will find the mysteries of the papacy more effectually unveiled, than by any formal or THEORETICAL description of that Antichristian system. It is by a view of our Romish Adversary's conflicts with the Founders of Protestantism, that we become

* Preface, p. xviii.

best acquainted with his cruel and despotic designs, his contemptible artifices, and his ridiculous superstitions.

Several persons, and even some of our leading Senators, suppose that Popery has long since been abundantly meliorated. But I wish they may not be nearer the truth, who think that the spirit of Protestantism has sadly degenerated. Both these points may receive much illustration from that part of this History which is yet unfinished. In the mean time, the true nature and character of Protestantism, as well as of Popery, ought to be carefully examined, and ascertained with all possible accuracy. And for this purpose, the diligent study of the same memorable period, and especially of the first eight years of it, namely, from 1517 to 1525, will be found peculiarly useful. During these years, Luther stood almost alone; and the documents contained in this and the preceding Volume will leave no doubt on the mind of the inquisitive Reader as to the real motives by which he was actuated. Then the doctrines of Luther are well known to be, in the main, the doctrines of every branch of the Protestant Reformation. These, with the rapidity of lightning, penetrated almost every part of Europe; became the fruitful source of various Christian institutions and establishments; and, as hitherto they were supported rather by the blood of the martyrs, than the power of princes and

prelates, they beautifully exhibit the native vigour of the reviving Church of Christ*.

Doubtless, in describing thus at length the interesting scenes which immediately led to our blessed deliverence from papal darkness and iniquity, the Historian's progress through the sixteenth century is inevitably retarded; but it should be remembered, that he is in no degree deviating from the original plan of the work; and that he is hereby laying a good foundation for brevity, precision and perspicuity, in the continuation of the History.

* Com. de Luth. Præloq.

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(*continued.*)

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FROM THE CONCLUSION OF THE DIET OF WORMS TO THE DEATH OF LEO X.

LUTHER'S PATMOS.
HIS EMPLOYMENTS.
HE IS CENSURED BY THE PARISIAN DIVINES.
..... BY KING HENRY VIII.
THE DEATH OF LEO X.

THE followers of Luther were much disheartened by the sudden disappearance of their leader. Various reports were circulated concerning him, and they knew not what to believe. Not only an anxious solicitude for the safety of his person invaded the minds of all who, throughout Germany feared God, but at the same time a distressing apprehension of losing such an instructor in so early a period of his labours produced the most melancholy and inauspicious forebodings. The alarms, on this occasion, and the affectionate feelings of good people who were already in possession of a degree of evangelical light, and were in the way to obtain more, are well described by Nic. Gerbelius of Strasburg, in a letter, dated May the twenty-sixth, which was addressed and sent

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to Luther himself, but under the greatest uncertainty of finding him.

"Nothing can possibly be more obscure and contradictory than the various rumours, which we receive concerning you. The report every-where prevalent and the least changeable is, that assassins laid wait for you in ambush, seized, and murdered you. On the other hand, some say you are returned SAFE to Wittemberg. Which is the truth we are entirely in doubt. However, all learned and good men, without exception, earnestly wish the latter account may be confirmed. You cannot believe how your adversaries exult and triumph in the hope of the former proving true. What madness, what ignorance is this! that men should not see what a train of evils, what torrents of human blood must be the probable consequence of the massacre of Luther!—As for us, who aspire after Christian liberty and the salvation of our souls, and have known you to be a teacher of the true faith as it is in Jesus, we are afflicted in different ways and degrees; but, in general, it is impossible for me to make you comprehend how extremely anxious we are for your personal safety. It is not that we envy you the glory of being dead to this world, and of enjoying the kingdom of heaven, for the sake of which you have, with incredible firmness and magnanimity, proved yourself superior to the troubles and persecutions of the present time; but because you appear to us to have been the man, who, with a very few others, have rightly expounded the Gospel of Christ; and because we had entertained a well-grounded hope, that under your guidance, there might have been a restoration of all those good things, which have been long lost by the wickedness or the indolence of our forefathers.—Wherefore, my very learned Luther, if you have any regard for me, and the rest, who are so anxious about you, and that Divine Gospel, which you have preached with many labours, dangers, and solicitudes, I entreat you to

let us know,—whether you are alive,—whether you are at liberty, or whether you have it no longer in your power to write and instruct us;—in short, in what circumstances you now are. It is said, that all persons are proscribed who shall dare to read your books, or profess to believe that you teach the truth*." CENT. XVI.

Luther's Patmos.

Luther at first found his confinement to be a great matter of patience; and it was not without difficulty that he was brought to endure it with resignation. His health suffered considerably from the change in his manner of living. The more rich and plentiful diet, which, as he had afterwards reason to believe, was supplied at the elector's expense, did not well agree with the constitution and temperament of a man who had long been accustomed to the labours and abstinence of the monastery. He complains, that his body was afflicted with the most obstinate and alarming constipations, while his mind grew feeble and unable to resist temptations. He says, he became languid and almost lifeless in private prayer, and was addicted to too much eating and drinking, and to lazy practices. Such is the harsh sentence which this extraordinary man was inclined to pass upon himself. It is the peculiar character of a real servant of God to see his own faults in a strong light, and rarely to speak in mitigation of them. We must learn however, to correct the impression which this account is calculated to make, by adverting to the positive evidence of his adversaries, to the well-known productions of his pen during his residence in the castle of Wartburg, and, lastly, to the inferences which we cannot but draw,—though indirectly,—from his repeated expressions of paternal care and affectionate concern for the condition of the church.

His employments.

The papists never charge Luther with indolence. On the contrary, they allow that in his solitude, which, after the name of that island to which the

* Seck. 161.

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apostle John was banished, he frequently called HIS PATMOS, he laboured with indefatigable industry, published many new books, confirmed his disciples in their attachment to him, defended his old heresies, and daily invented new ones*.

This account, in the language of protestantism, would be expressed somewhat differently; namely, that no man ever adhered more steadily than Luther to the leading principle of the Reformation, "Articles of faith are to be founded only on the revealed will of God;" that in his confinement he preserved a strong sense of the value of time; and that a profound veneration for the holy Scriptures, with an abhorrence of every species of priestcraft, constantly directed his judgment, invigorated his resolutions, and supported him in his almost incredible labours and trials.

Tract on confession.

A little book concerning the abuses of PRIVATE CONFESSIONS was one of his productions in the castle. As it was composed in the German language, and would be read by many, it must have been highly offensive to the ecclesiastics in general. "My design in this book," says Luther, "was not to put an end to private confession, but to render the practice of it USEFUL. There was no doing of this, without laying open some of those inconveniences which arise from a bad way of managing it. I touched on these things as delicately as possible; and yet my adversaries were up in arms against me on this account; not considering, that the whole world is full of stories respecting the scandalous things which take place under the pretence of secret confession; neither do they seem aware, how many facts connected with this subject I have passed over from a principle of Christian decency, lest the very mention of them should contaminate the reader's mind. It is too true, that many of the monks urge the people to confess, not from a regard to piety, but for the pupose of

* Maimbourg, Sect. 45.

enriching themselves. They live in the houses of the opulent, and acquire an ascendant over them by becoming acquainted with their secrets: they contrive to be with them when they are dying; and insinuate themselves into their last wills. Let men only consider what a source of evils, what a snare to consciences, the common practice of confessing has been, and they will not be surprised that I should have ventured to suggest certain amendments in this matter." On the whole, it was the wish of this sound Divine, that the church discipline respecting confession might be regulated by the eighteenth of Matthew, verses 15—20; convinced as he was, that the Roman catholic mode tended neither to increase the faith nor amend the lives of the people, but rather to instil into their minds a persuasion, that by a private confession of sin, and a consequent submission to penances, or to other injunctions of the clergy, the greatest crimes might be expiated, though the commission of them were ever so frequent or ever so notorious. How very different is all this from a true penitential sorrowing and humiliation for sin, and a comfortable expectation of pardon, founded on the faithful promises of Jesus Christ!

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The Augustine friars at Wittemberg were among the first who dared openly to abolish the popish mode of celebrating PRIVATE MASSES. Luther received this news in his castle with great satisfaction, both as it demonstrated the zeal of his brethren who were embarked in the same cause, and as it exhibited a very pleasing and important effect of his own labours. More than a year had now elapsed since he had published his tract on the Babylonish captivity, in which he exposes the unscriptural doctrine of the Romish mass. He now resumed the subject, and with great precision and copiousness went through all that his adversaries could advance in favour of their absurd and unscriptural notions on this article of faith. This performance is intituled, A Treatise

Against private masses.

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concerning the Abrogation of Private Masses, and is sufficiently long and laboured; but, happily, in our age it is quite superfluous to spend time in convincing protestants, that the true scriptural idea of the Lord's Supper is not a real sacrifice under the appearance of bread and wine, but a thankful commemoration of the GREAT OBLATION once offered; not a repetition of sacred offerings, which have any intrinsic value in them for the expiation of sin, but a participation of the consecrated elements in obedience to the command of our dying Saviour. Luther took immense pains to place these points in what he conceived to be their true light; and his efforts were crowned with MUCH SUCCESS*.

It was not till after much doubt and consideration that Luther became fully convinced of the lawfulness of the marriage of all the clergy.—The case of the monks created the greatest difficulty to his mind, because they had voluntarily devoted themselves to a perpetual celibacy;—whereas the rest of the clergy were prohibited marriage only by unlawful ecclesiastical ordinances. In his Patmos, however, he wrote on these subjects with that fixed determination, which had been the result of much impartial inquiry and patient thinking. The book on MONASTIC VOWS is dedicated, in the most affectionate terms, to the author's father, who had formerly resisted his son's desires to withdraw from the world and enter a convent†. It may be sufficient to say of this work, that it is copious, instructive, and admirably adapted to the time in which it was published. As it exposes the evils of monastic promises and engagements, with various other abuses of popery connected with them, it necessarily gave great offence to a corrupt hierarchy, which daily found its authority to lessen, in proportion as the wicked

On monastic vows.

* But not complete success. We shall afterwards have occasion to advert to his mistakes concerning the eucharist.

† See Vol. iv.

devices that supported it were better understood, and more generally detested.—The Papists, as might be expected, clamoured against the Reformer's novel doctrines, and represented them as favourable to a life of ease, indulgence, and sensuality. "Priests might marry, monks might leave their cloisters, and the people no longer be afraid of the penal laws of the church *." On the contrary, Luther, in arguing with his adversaries, was never content to stand merely on the defensive. He constantly maintained, that the primary objects of papistical solicitude and contention was neither an evangelical purity of faith or practice, but rather the efficacy of certain external performances, as fastings, confessions, penances and masses, contrived for the express purpose of affording false peace to burdened consciences, and keeping out of sight the atoning blood of Jesus, and the scriptural method of justification by faith alone, with the renovation of our fallen nature through the operation of the Holy Spirit. CENT. XVI.

James Latomus, a divine of Louvain, in a printed defence of the censures which the ecclesiastical faculty of that city passed upon Luther's writings †, had opposed the Reformer's views of the doctrines of grace and faith, and charged him with maintaining seditious and heretical opinions. There presently issued from the castle of Wartburg a most spirited CONFUTATION OF THIS DEFENCE; "a confutation," says Seckendorf, "replete with so much solid learning and sound divinity, that it was impossible to reply to it without being guilty of obvious cavilling or downright impiety. This little book," continues he, "shines among the contemporary publications like the moon among the stars; and I will venture to assert, that if the author of it had never published any thing else in his whole life, he would, on account of this single tract, deserve to be compared to the greatest divines which ever existed in the Church. At the time of writing it, he Against Latomus.

* Du Pin. † Pag. 418.

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was furnished with no other book but the Bible; and yet he interprets the leading passages of the prophets and the apostles, and does away the deceitful glosses of sophistical commentators with so much exquisite erudition and ability, that the genuine meaning of the inspired writers cannot but be clear to every pious and attentive reader."—Though all this is true in the strictest sense, yet as Luther's ideas of the doctrine of salvation by grace have already been explained at large, long quotations from this incomparable treatise are less necessary: and I shall rather choose to select a few short passages, that may serve to show the SPIRIT which this eminent servant of God preserved in his solitude, and during a persecution which so very much endangered his life.

Luther's reply to Latomus is dedicated to Justus Jonas, who had been recently appointed to the presidency of the college of Wittemberg. "As I wish to congratulate you on your new situation, and have not the opportunity of doing it in person, have the goodness to accept this proof of my disposition towards you; and beseech the Lord for me, that I may be delivered from wicked and unfaithful men, and that a door may be opened to me, for the praise of the merciful gospel of his Son.

"I suppose you have seen Latomus's defence of the Louvain divines, and how the man glories in his master the pope and his bull. My observations on his performance will, I hope, prove this at least,—That if Latomus's arguments had been published in due time, and those wise divines had weighed them, as they ought to have done, before they decided on my case, they would neither have condemned my books nor have burnt them. It is an easy thing, during Luther's absence, to prate privately in remote corners, and to say,—'this is wrong; and that is heretical,'—when these very persons would not have ventured even to touch on subjects of this kind in public.

" I am convinced this ADMIRABLE DEFENCE would never have seen the light, had it not been for the pope's bull, that has puffed up the author with a confidence which makes him boast that what he has done is highly approved *. The man still dreams of the horrors which formerly used to be raised by the papal thunders, and supposes that the world will be frightened by his little publication. Hence it is, that, in his attacks on Luther, he dares to trifle in this manner with the tremendous declarations of the word of God. For my part, I can have no wish, but that SUCH conduct should be approved by SUCH a bull. Again, I should be even sorry, if I were not condemned by SUCH a bull. This whole business is in perfect harmony; the bull, the cause, the judge, the advocate;—from whose society, and its contagion, may the Lord Jesus preserve me and every pious soul! Amen. CENT. XVI.

" You can scarcely believe with how much reluctance it is, that I have allowed my attention to be diverted from the quiet study of the Scriptures in this Patmos, by reading the sophistical quibbles of Latomus. To answer such a writer is a most irksome employment, which will neither increase a man's knowledge, nor exercise his genius; but will certainly destroy some hours of precious time. I fancy this writer has imagined that Luther was either absolutely taken off, or at least condemned to perpetual silence; and that therefore he was now at full liberty to impose on the public, and exercise a tyrannical dominion over their faith. For it is made a grievous charge against me, that I have lessened the authority and influence of the clergy over the minds of the people. I heartily wish my fault in this respect was much greater than it is!

" But I own, I have considerable fears, lest, during our violent contentions concerning grace and good works, we ourselves should be found deficient in

* He means, approved by the rulers of the church.

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both. For my part, when I reflect on the angry judgments of Almighty God, as displayed in the present situation of the church, I could wish that my eyes might supply fountains of water to lament that dreadful havock which the kingdom of sin and perdition makes of precious souls in these latter times. At Rome that monster of iniquity sits in the midst of the church, and boasts himself to be God's vicegerent. The bishops flatter him: the sophistical school-divines obey his nod; and there is nothing which the cringing hypocrites are not ready to do for him. In the mean time hell opens wide its infernal jaws, and Satan sports in the destruction of men; and no one is found on our side, who with deep sorrow might stand as a wall of defence for Israel in this day of indignation.

"It is my earnest prayer, that you, my brother, who by your appointment ought to teach the pestilential decretals of Antichrist, may be enlightened by the Spirit of God to do your duty; that is, to UNTEACH every thing that belongs to popery. For though we are compelled to live in Babylon, we ought to show that our affections are fixed on our own country, Jerusalem. Be strong, and of good comfort; and fear not Baalpeor; but believe in the Lord Jesus, who is blessed for evermore. Amen."

1. One of Latomus's charges against Luther is, that, in the beginning of the controversy, he pretended to submit to the pope. Luther answered, I was very SERIOUS in my submission; and the remembrance of it is grievous to my mind. From the bottom of my heart, I entertained sentiments of the pope, and of councils, and of universities, agreeable to the common way of thinking. For though I fancied I saw absurdities in them, and things contrary to Christianity, yet I bridled my suspicions; and for more than ten years I followed Solomon's advice "not to depend on my own understanding;" always supposing, that if there were really any things

impious in the established system, there must exist in the academies learned theologians who would not hold their peace: moreover, there was scarcely any place, where I should have thought it less likely than at Louvain, to have found such stupid blockheads as are there at present. CENT. XVI.

"In the course of this controversy my knowledge of the subject in dispute, as well as my courage, gradually increased. On the contrary, my adversaries, in their opposition to me, have betrayed the most astonishing ignorance and wickedness. Had they but restrained themselves within any tolerable bounds, doubtless I should have grown more and more confirmed in their folly and madness. I thank the Lord Jesus Christ, that in the course of these trials, he has been pleased to favour me with such an insight into the Scriptures, as is a hundred times preferable to the scholastic divinity of the times. I am now most fully convinced that the pope is that monster of Antichrist foretold throughout the sacred writings.

2. But Luther does not express himself with the MODERATION of a Christian.

Answ. I never set up myself for a holy man, nor even a moderate man. Take what liberties you please with my character; only acknowledge the truths contained in the Gospel. However, were I disposed to boast, my conscience tells me, that I never attacked any man's life or reputation; though, I own, I have exposed with considerable severity, a number of impious dogmas which militate against the word of God. I make no apology here; there are great examples on my side; as John the Baptist, St. Paul, and even Christ himself*.

3. Further, Latomus says, Luther's writings have a seditious tendency, and in no way make the people better.

Answ. Precisely the language of the Jews. They

* See Vol. iv.

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pretended to fear lest Christ should raise a sedition; and certainly they became no better for our Lord's expostulations. Ought Christ therefore to have held his tongue? Is this your divinity; 'They will not hear, therefore you must hold your peace?' In laying open faithfully the word of God, there is not the smallest ground for apprehending sedition.

4. To be brief. The grand accusations of Latomus were, that he described the Almighty as commanding his creatures to do impossibilities; and that the very best actions of the best men had the nature of sin.

In all ages it is matter of patience to faithful expositors of the word of God, to find themselves continually misrepresented in this manner. Do they show from the Scriptures, that without divine grace we are altogether helpless and lost; and are deservedly exposed to the wrath of God, because of the voluntary malignity of apostate nature? They are then charged with representing God as imposing laws on men, which they have not power to obey; though they never mean more than to humble man under a sense of his native depravity, and lead him to seek the remedy of the grace of Christ. Do they, in the very language of Scripture, describe the sin that dwelleth in us *, as mixing with all that we think, say, and do? They are instantly accused of saying that good works are sins. Instead of cavilling in this way, and setting up human imaginations and conjectures in opposition to the express testimonies of Scripture, it behoved Latomus, and all who have trod in his steps, to produce a direct confutation of the arguments adduced by Luther, and by others, who have preached and written as Luther did. And such a confutation can be attempted to no purpose, except by the authority of Scripture.

In the mind of our Saxon theologian there

* Romans, vii.

seems to have been an instinctive aversion to MERE VERBAL controversy. All his inquiries are about essential matters. He fastens on his objects with a retentive grasp; and in spite of the evasive arts of his adversaries, he compels them to join issue with him on some great practical doctrine.—So in his answer to Latomus; he shows that the NATURE OF SIN was the turning point in that debate.—"If," says he, "in the passages I have quoted from St. Paul, it can be proved that the apostle does not use the word SIN in its true and proper sense, my whole argument falls to the ground; but if this cannot be proved, then Latomus's objections are without foundation. He blames me for maintaining that no human action can endure the severity of God's judgment. I reply, he ought to shudder in undertaking to defend the opposite sentiment. Suppose, for a moment, that any man could say, he has indeed fulfilled the precept of God in some one good work. Then such a man might fairly address the Almighty to this effect: 'Behold, O Lord! by the help of thy grace, I have done this good work. There is in it no sin; no defect; it needs not thy pardoning mercy: which, therefore, in this instance I do not ask. I desire thou wouldst judge this action strictly and impartially. I feel assured, that as thou art just and faithful, thou canst not condemn it; and therefore I glory in it before thee. Our Saviour's prayer teaches me to implore the forgiveness of my trespasses; but in regard to this work, mercy is not necessary for the remission of sin, but rather justice for the reward of merit.' To such indecent, unchristian conclusions are we naturally led by the pride of the scholastic system.—To conclude. This doctrine of the sinless perfection of human works finds no support in Scripture: it rests entirely on a few expressions of the fathers, who are yet by no means agreed among themselves; and if they were agreed, still their authority is only human. We are

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directed to prove ALL THINGS, and to hold fast that which is good. ALL doctrines then are to be proved by the sacred Scriptures. There is no exception here in favour of Augustine, of Jerome, of Origen, nor even of an Antichristian Pope.—Augustine, however, is entirely on my side of the question. And, therefore, though some of the fathers, in describing our natural frailties, may have studiously avoided the use of the word SIN, I think it much safer to use the language of Augustine and of certain other fathers, because they speak scripturally. Such are my reasons for choosing to call that SIN, to which you apply the softer terms of defect and imperfection. But further, I may well interrogate all those, who use the language of Latomus, whether they do not resemble the Stoics in their abstract definition of a wise man, or Quintilian in his definition of a perfect orator; that is, whether they do not speak of an imaginary character, such as never was, nor ever will be? I challenge them to produce a man, who will dare to speak of his own work, and say it is without sin, even in the sense in which they use the word. Why then is it so very heavy a crime in me to avow a sentiment which they themselves in reality carry farther than I ever did?

"But perhaps you will say, 'If, then, there is IN FACT so very little difference between us, why are you so contentious about the use of words, and why so prejudiced in favour of your own mode of expression?' I answer,—

"Your way of speaking leads to most pernicious views of the nature of sin. You attribute to mere human powers that, which is to be ascribed to divine grace alone. You make men presumptuous and secure in their vices. You depreciate the knowledge of the mystery of Christ, and, by consequence, the spirit of thankfulness and love to God. There is a prodigious effusion of grace expended in the conversion of sinners: you lose sight of this; you

make nature innocent, and so darken or pervert the Scripture, that the sense of it is almost lost in the Christian world." CENT. XVI.

Let this suffice as a small specimen of the wisdom and purity of the evangelical principles which shine through this confutation of Latomus. The learned reader, who values the Gospel of Christ as the pearl of great price, will enlarge on the subject in his own mind, and observe the near resemblance which subsists between the papistical notion of SIN, and certain modern corruptions in divinity. Happily, the days of religious persecution are no more: happily, we do not, like Luther, endanger our lives by maintaining, that, "without the grace of God, it is impossible for us to keep his commandments, and that, after all, we need the tender mercy and forgiveness of our judge:" nevertheless, the MATTER of the controversy, now briefly reviewed, must always be looked on as of the last importance, if any thing is to be called important, in which the glory of God, the necessity of the grace of Jesus Christ, the exercises of real humility, and the comfort of afflicted consciences are eminently concerned.

Luther concludes his book with observing, that he is accused of treating Thomas Aquinas, Alexander, and others, in an injurious and ungrateful manner. He defends himself by saying, those authors had done much harm to his own mind; and he advises young students of divinity to avoid the scholastic theology and philosophy as the ruin of their souls. He expresses great doubts whether Thomas Aquinas was even a good man: he has a better opinion of Bonaventura. "Thomas Aquinas held many heretical opinions, and is the grand cause of the prevalence of the doctrines of Aristotle, that destroyer of sound doctrine. What is it to me," continues Luther, "if the bishop of Rome has canonized him in his bulls?"

He exhorts the president Jonas, and his other

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friends at Wittemberg, to exert themselves in replying to the rest of the papal advocates. "Is not," says he, "the glory of the Gospel a common cause. I have bruised the head of the serpent, why do not you trample on his body *?"

I know not whether any man that ever lived had a greater reverence than Luther for the holy Scriptures. It was the sight of them, through God's blessing, which illumined the mind of the Reformer: it was the want of them, which, through the iniquity of papal artifice and tyranny, held the people in the darknesss of ignorance and superstition. Luther, therefore, easily foresaw the important consequences which must flow from a fair translation of the Bible in the German language. Nothing would so effectually shake the pillars of ecclesiastical despotism; nothing was so likely to spread the knowledge of pure Christian doctrine. Accordingly he rejoiced in the design of expediting the work; while his adversaries deprecated the execution of it, more than any heresy of which the greatest enemy of the church could be guilty. It was in his Patmos at Wartburg that he began to apply himself to this great undertaking. In the conclusion of his confutation of Latomus, he tells his friend Jonas, that in his confinement he had no books at hand except the word of God: "not," says he, "that I set any great value on having a multitude of books, but I should like to see, whether Latomus has quoted the fathers fairly. But I have now done with him. I really grudge the time spent in reading and in answering this worthless publication; particularly, as I was EMPLOYED IN TRANSLATING the Epistles and Gospels into our own language."

Translation of the New Testament.

From several authentic documents, it appears, that, during his solitude in the summer of the year 1521, he not only translated all the New Testament, but also took great pains to improve his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages, for

* Luth. II. Confut. Latom.

the purpose of rendering his intended version of the Scriptures more complete. "I find," says he, "I have undertaken a work which is above my strength. I shall not touch the Old Testament till I can have the assistance of yourself and my other friends at Wittemberg. If it were possible that I could be with you, and remain undiscovered in a snug chamber, I would come; and there, with your help, would translate the whole from the beginning, that at length there might be a version of the Bible fit for Christians to read. This would be a great work, of immense consequence to the public, and worthy of all our labours*." CENT. XVI.

Such, during a captivity of more than nine months, were the employments of this active servant of God, who, notwithstanding, accuses himself of doing too little, and of eating too much. Besides the compositions which have been mentioned, he wrote many letters in his castle to his trusty friends and intimates, which very much lay open the unfeigned sentiments of his heart. The plan of this history admonishes us to be brief; otherwise the temptation to produce copious extracts from them is great. A strong and pious confidence in God, an unbounded benevolence to the "household of faith," and a determination to hazard every thing in the cause of religious truth, mark the spirit of Luther in every thing he says or does. He encourages the faithful, he reproves the timid, he laments the oppression of the church, he exults in the prospect of her deliverance. With inexpressible tenderness he comforts his desponding friends; while, on all occasions, he withstands his most powerful enemies with an unconquerable intrepidity.

During his residence in the castle of Wartburg he suffered his beard and hair to grow, assumed an

* This Extract is from one of Luther's letters to Nic. Amsdorff, the rector of the university at Wittemberg, dated Wartburg Castle, Jan. 1522.

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equestrian sort of dress, and passed for a country gentleman, under the name of Yonker George. He sometimes amused himself with the exercise of hunting in company with his keepers; and his observations on that diversion, in a letter to Spalatinus, are curious and interesting.

"Give yourself no concern in regard to my suffering in this exile. It is of no consequence to me, provided I am not burdensome to the people of this house. I would have no one be put to inconvenience on my account. I suppose the prince supports me, otherwise I would not stay an hour here, if I were convinced that my wants were supplied at the expense of the master of this family, though I own he furnishes every thing I wish for with the greatest cheerfulness. Lately I spent two days in seeing the painful, yet agreeable, amusement of those famous people called hunters and fowlers. We caught two hares, and some miserable young partridges. Laudable employment indeed for men of leisure! For my part, theological subjects occupied my thoughts, even while I was among the dogs and the nets. And any pleasure that I might receive from this species of relaxation, was fully balanced by the sentiments of grief and pity excited in my mind by an interpretation which I could not but give to the symbolical scenes at that time under my contemplation. This, thought I, is an exact representation of Satan, who, by his snares and his dogs, namely, the corrupt theologians and ecclesiastical rulers, pursues and entangles simple, faithful souls, in the same way that the harmless hares and partridges are taken. To be brief, the similitude was so striking as to affect me exceedingly."

In a letter to Melancthon, he says, "I sit here in my Patmos, reflecting all the day on the wretched condition of the church. And I bemoan the hardness of my heart, that I am not dissolved into tears on this account. May God have mercy upon us!"

In another letter to the same person, he discovers evident symptoms of impatience. CENT. XVI.

"For the glory of the WORD OF GOD, and for the mutual confirmation of myself and others, I would much rather burn on the live coals, than live here alone, half alive, and useless. If I perish, it is God's will; neither will the Gospel suffer in any degree. I hope you will succeed me, as Elisha did Elijah."

Melancthon, the excellent coadjutor of Luther, though learned, ingenuous, unblemished in his manners, and cordially attached to the best of causes, began about this time to exhibit more sensibly than ever the constitutional timidity of his temper. Far superior to all the rest of Luther's adherents in talents and attainments, he was inferior to many of them in courage and fortitude; and on that account unequal to the character of SUPERINTENDANT, which he was now called to sustain. Luther, who loved the man, and was well aware of his infirmity, frequently, in the very kindest manner, reproved his desponding spirit, and at the same time encouraged him to be both bold and patient in the cause of the reformation. He also solicited the Elector Frederic, through the intercession of Spalatinus, to provide for the more comfortable support of this learned professor, whose character contributed so much to the reputation of the university of Wittemberg.

Melancthon and his brethren are disheartened in the summer of A. D. 1521.

In fact, not only Melancthon, but the rest of his brethren, the ruling academicians, were much disheartened during the summer of this year, partly on account of the absence of their grand leader, and partly because they experienced not a little embarrassment from the excessive caution of the elector and his court. They were not allowed the full privilege of publishing any of Luther's writings, nor even of disputing publicly on certain questions, which, it was supposed, might give offence to persons of distinction who were much attached to the

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established religion. Luther, though no man that ever lived was more exemplary in the practice of lawful obedience "to the powers that be," made no scruple to refuse compliance with the will of the civil magistrate, whenever that will, in his judgment, was directly contrary to the commands of God. Accordingly, he exhorted his Christian friends of the university not to follow the counsels of the court, but to take the lead themselves, as he had done. "We should not," says he, "have had one half the success we have had, if I had taken the advice of the court." And about two or three months after this, he wrote to this last-mentioned friend in the warmest terms of expostulation and remonstrance. He tells him, that he was determined to publish what he had written against the archbishop of Mentz, however the prince and his secretary might dislike the measure, and that it was at their peril if they obstructed his design. "The peace and approbation of God are ever to be preferred to the peace and approbation of the world. What, though some of our friends have exhibited a turbulent spirit, will the Gospel, on account of their irregularity, come to nothing? Was there not, even among the apostles, a traitor, Judas? In ALL circumstances we ought to adhere strictly to the simple WORD OF GOD, and not merely when the WORD happens to thrive and be respected among men. Let those, who please, take against us.—But why are we to be always looking on the dark side of things? why not indulge hopes of better times?"

There is nothing which so completely lays open to posterity the real opinions and motives of this great Reformer as his private letters.—When the common people of Erfurt, together with the youths of the university of that place, had committed some acts of riot and violence against the clergy, Luther expressed his disapprobation of such conduct, thus: "It is very proper that the ecclesiastics, who prove

themselves to be incurably profligate, should be checked and discouraged, but by no means IN THIS MANNER. This MANNER of doing it brings a just disgrace upon our Gospel, and hinders its success. Moreover, this way of showing kindness to us afflicts me exceedingly. For it is to my mind a clear proof that we are not yet worthy of being esteemed before God, as faithful ministers of HIS WORD, and that Satan makes a mock of all our labours." CENT. XVI.

It appears from his letters to Melancthon, that he was completely in doubt, whether he should ever return to Wittemberg; "but," says he, "I am ready to go where God shall please to send me. The accounts which I receive of your abundant success in religion and learning, during my absence, rejoice my heart exceedingly, and make me endure this separation much better. The very circumstance of your going on so prosperously while I AM ABSENT is most peculiarly delightful to me; because it may serve to convince those WICKED ONES, that however they may rage and foam, their desires shall perish; and Christ will finish the work which he has begun *."

Luther, while under confinement, wrote a long letter to his flock in general, which abounds with pious sentiments and affectionate expressions, and is well calculated to counteract the mis-statements of those careless or irreligious historians, who would represent this eminent servant of God as a man of ambitious, factious, sectarian principles. He laments that he was not as yet reckoned worthy to undergo, for Christ's sake, any thing more than hatred and reproach. He owns, that if the Lord had not been on his side, he must long ago have been torn to pieces by his adversaries. He is

* This does not agree with an insinuation of the learned translator of Mosheim, namely, that Luther could not bear to see another crowned with the glory of executing a plan which he had laid ..... Mosh. Sect. I. Chap. II. 18.

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thankful for the divine support, which had three times enabled him to appear before them with a becoming resolution,—at Augsburg, at Leipsic, and at Worms. "I was in hopes," says he, "at Worms, that the prelates and doctors would have examined me with the most diligent scrupulosity concerning every particular; but no other demand was made, no other language was to be heard, than the imperious charge, Retract, Retract the doctrines you have taught. I do not mention these things as matters of boasting, or as though they were done in my own strength; on the contrary, I would praise God for his goodness, in having so encouraged his unworthy servant, and dispirited our opponents, that they were thrown into the utmost consternation, and could make no stand in public debate against even a single mendicant monk. As they are apt to talk in an ostentatious way of their prodigious erudition, I recommended it to them to come to Wittemberg, and try whether they could prove themselves our superiors in the discharge of pastoral duties; but none of them dared to accept the challenge."

The mind of Luther had long been impressed with a deep sense of the importance of regular and judicious instructions from the pulpit. He had experienced the advantage of them among his own people; and they were now athirst for further explanations of the WORD OF GOD. To supply in some measure the failure of his usual personal services when present with them, he not only wrote down, during his captivity, a number of familiar expositions of the Epistles and Gospels in the German language, and sent them to be printed at Wittemberg, but also took very great pains to institute lectures or preachings in the afternoons of holydays. He desired Melancthon to discharge this branch of clerical duty; and he most earnestly exhorted his flock to an assiduous attendance, instead of spending their time in drinking and gaming.

How incessant were the labours, how indefatigable was the spirit of this great Reformer! CENT. XVI.

Evangelical publications, and evangelical preachings, with constant exhortation to study diligently the holy Scriptures, were the external means on which Luther always relied for the propagation of Christian truth, and the deliverance of the people from popish darkness and slavery. Wise and persevering in the use of these means, he had the consolation to hear more and more of their blessed effects. The Augustinians of Wittemberg left off the celebration of private masses, new preachers of the Gospel daily lifted up their voice throughout the electorate of Saxony; and though some persons of the higher ranks, both among the magistrates and the clergy, were intimidated by the imperial edict of Worms, the common people gladly attended to the pure doctrines of salvation. At Zwickau in particular, during the course of this year, Nicholas Hausman accepted the pastoral office. This town appears to have been highly favoured by Providence; for the sentiments of Luther, from the very first agitation of the ecclesiastical controversy, were there received and taught in private assemblies. There also, among other preachers of the Gospel, was distinguished the very intimate friend of our Reformer, the celebrated Frederic Myconius*, who had fled from the persecuting rage of George the duke of Saxony: and in regard to N. Hausman, if we had no other reason for mentioning this excellent minister, his name might deserve a place in these memoirs, on account of the singular eulogy pronounced on him by Luther. "WHAT WE PREACH, HE LIVES." A. D. 1521.

Friberg was the capital of a very small district, which was governed by the brother of George duke of Saxony. This prince, called Henry duke of

* See Append. Fred. Mycon.

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Saxony began to show some regard to evangelical doctrine. He expressed his detestation of the pope's bull, and commenced a correspondence with Luther; but through fear of the edict of Worms, and of his brother George, one of the most violent bigots of the age, he was, for the present, checked in his religious researches. His duchess, Catharine of Mecklenburg, exhibited a laudable pattern of Christian fidelity in the profession of divine truth. She was in imminent danger of persecution from the bitter hostile spirit of her husband's counsellors; but her trust was in God. In her letters, written several years afterwards, she declares herself ready, through the divine assistance, to suffer patiently any thing that could happen to her for adhering to the sacred Scriptures.

Thus the good seed, sown under various circumstances, was springing up and bearing fruit in almost every corner of Germany. The Christian student of ecclesiastical history, who has skill and leisure for the employment, might furnish a pleasing and useful collection of the fragments of true piety and spiritual understanding, which appeared in the early years of the preparation of men's hearts for the blessed Reformation.

Amidst the consolation which Luther in his retreat derived from the accounts which he was continually receiving of the courage and success of his disciples, and the progress of his doctrines, the report of several events reached the castle of Wartburg, which must in some measure have damped the joy and the expectations of the captive Reformer.

1. He was so much affected with the news of CERTAIN PROCEEDINGS at Wittemberg, that he determined to run the hazard of making a private excursion to that place, for the purpose of conversing with his friends on subjects which deeply and anxiously

interested his thoughts. The exact circumstances of this clandestine visit are but imperfectly known; and we can do no more than form conjectures respecting the PROCEEDINGS which seem to have given rise to this extraordinary step. Many of the canons of Wittemberg disgraced the nascent reformation, both by an obstinate adherence to the reigning superstitions, and by a shameful profligacy of manners. In the next place, the untractable temper of Carolstadt showed itself more and more, and gave great concern to Luther. "I lament," says he, "the behaviour of this man. Indeed we have it in our power easily to withstand his precipitate motions, but then we shall give occasion to the adversary to triumph on account of our internal discords; and not only so,—our weaker brethren will also be much offended*." CENT. XVI.

A passage in one of Luther's letters to Spalatinus may be supposed to throw further light on this subject. "I came to Wittemberg, and among the most sweet meetings and conversations with my friends, I found this mixture of wormwood; namely, that several of my letters and little publications had been completely suppressed. They had not even been heard of or seen by any one. I leave you to judge whether I have not just cause to be much displeased with this treatment. IN GENERAL, what I have had an opportunity of seeing and hearing gives me the highest satisfaction. May the Lord strengthen and support the courage of those who wish well to the cause! In the course of my journey, however, I was not a little vexed to hear various reports concerning the restless disposition of some of our friends; and I have promised to print, as soon as ever I return to my asylum, a public exhortation applicable to the circumstances. I must explain myself more particularly at another time. Commend me to our illustrious prince, from whose knowledge I have judged it proper to conceal this little excursion to Wittem-

* Letter to Amsdorff.

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berg and back again. You know my reasons. Farewell. I am at this moment in Amsdorff's house, in an apartment with my dear Philip Melancthon."

Luther is censured by the Parisian divines. A. D. 1521.

2. It was in his Patmos that Luther first heard of the solemn censure, which the divines of the faculty of Paris passed on his writings, April the fifteenth, 1521*. The university of Paris was the most ancient, and at that time the most respectable of the learned societies of Europe. In 1517 they had ventured to call in question the pope's infallibility; and Luther himself is charged with having repeatedly acknowledged the Parisian doctors to be wise and orthodox theologians; and with having also promised to submit his cause to their arbitration †. It seems therefore extremely probable that he must have been disappointed, and in some degree chagrined, when he found that that assembly of divines on which he had most relied, and among whom there probably were some spiritual persons of an enlightened understanding, adhered IN THE MAIN to the old prejudices and the scholastic divinity, and had actually pronounced his doctrine to be "erroneous both in faith and manners, and proper only to deceive simple people; that it was injurious to all the doctors, and derogatory from the power of the church; openly schismatical, contrary to the sacred Scriptures, blasphemous against the Holy Spirit, and pernicious to the Christian commonwealth."

He is censured also by Henry VIII.

3. Another disagreeable event, which about the same time must have proved a trial to the irritable temper of the Reformer, was the celebrated answer to his treatise on the Babylonish captivity, published by Henry VIII. king of England. We learn from the papal archives ‡, that this prince, before his contest with the Saxon divine, had been soliciting the pope to bestow on him some honourable title, similar

* See Vol. iv. Du Pin.

† Comment de Luth. LXIII, and CXIII. Maimbourg, Sect. 46.

‡ Pallav.

to the Catholic or Most Christian King. It is even said, that the title of MOST CHRISTIAN MAJESTY had been intended for Henry, but that the design was prevented by political considerations. The book was presented to Leo with the greatest formality, the English legate observing that his royal master had been instructed by the very best preceptors *, was well versed in sacred learning, had frequently acquired praise in disputes with the most learned persons of his own country; and that he now gloriously dared to contend with Luther, who was a man of no contemptible erudition. Leo, in return, spoke of the royal performance in such terms as if it had been dictated by immediate inspiration; and as a testimony of the gratitude of the church, conferred on its author the title of Defender of the Faith; an appellation still retained by the kings of England, though avowedly hostile to those religious sentiments, by defending which Henry merited from the court of Rome that illustrious distinction. This prince had been educated in a strict attachment to the church of Rome; and notwithstanding his active disposition and violent passions, had a love for learning. Moreover, he was particularly exasperated against Luther, because he had treated Thomas Aquinas, the king's favourite author, with great contempt. The young monarch, therefore, ambitious of fame of every kind, determined not only to oppose the progress of Lutheran tenets by his great authority, but to combat them also with scholastic weapons; and with this view he wrote in Latin his book on the seven sacraments, in opposition to the novel opinions.

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Martin Luther, however, was neither to be overawed by the reputation of the university of Paris, nor by the dignity of the Sovereign of England. He

* In fact, the father of Henry VIII. being of a suspicious temper, and desirous of keeping his son from the knowledge of public business, occupied him entirely in pursuits of literature. Father Paul tells us, that as he was not the eldest son, he was intended to be archbishop of Canterbury.

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soon published his animadversions on both, in as vehement and severe a style, as in the course of his numerous polemics he had ever used to his meanest antagonist. This treatment prejudiced Henry still more against the new doctrines; but the public admired these fresh instances of the undaunted spirit of the Reformer; the controversy drew more attention; and in spite of the combination both of the civil and the ecclesiastical powers, the Lutheran opinions daily acquired new converts in every part of Europe.

Neither Henry's book, nor Luther's defence, are of sufficient importance to engage our notice. Silence, or a soft answer, is, in many cases, the best reply to calumnies: but this was a lesson which Luther was slow to learn; though afterwards he perceived the unreasonableness and the inconvenience of having unnecessarily irritated the spirit of a vain-glorious and capricious monarch, which he found it impossible to appease. "Grievous words stir up anger." The propensity to resentment which Luther found in his own nature, ought to have taught him to deal more gently with the tempers of others. His friends at the time blamed the acrimony of his language to Henry VIII.; most of his admirers since have had the same sentiments; and I cannot but think that the laboured apologies of Seckendorf had better have been spared*.

There was, however, this essential difference between the faults of the Protestant Reformer, and those of his adversaries, namely, that even against his most inveterate enemies, he never proceeded farther than the use of intemperate language. By principle, as we may see more distinctly hereafter, he was an enemy to persecution, and prayed for the conversion of those, against whom he inveighed. On the other side, nothing but blood and torture would satisfy the rage of the papal despots. In the course of this year, Belgium began to be the scene of their san-

* Seck. 188.

guinary violence; some particulars of which shall afterwards be related. CENT. XVI.

It was, doubtless, a grateful piece of news to Luther in his confinement, to find that the powerful pen of Melancthon had been employed in defending him against the decision of the Parisian divines. "I have seen," says he, "the decree of the Parisian sophists, and at the same time the apology of my friend Philip Melancthon. From my heart I rejoice. Christ would never have so completely blinded their eyes, if he had not determined to take care of his own cause, and put an end to the despotism of his enemies*." Melancthon answers the Parisian divines.

Concerning his wrangle with Henry VIII. he makes the following observations. "I was well aware that whatever I might reply to that absurd and virulent Thomist, the king of England, I should give offence to many. I have treated him as I thought proper, and even necessary, for many reasons. These are unknown at present, but will be manifest by and by." And in another letter to the same person†, he says, "My prince, the elector, has repeatedly admonished me to express myself in gentler terms, and so have many other of my friends; but I have always returned the same answer,—that I cannot comply with their wishes. The cause in which I am concerned is not an ordinary one, which may admit of concession and dissimulation. Of these I have foolishly been guilty already too often."

After all it must be owned, that it is much easier to censure Luther for want of moderation, than to exhibit a pattern of Christian meekness in a similar heat of controversy; and more particularly when a man is on the right side of an important practical question, which was most manifestly the case with Luther in his contest with Henry VIII. In ages of greater refinement indeed, whether men are conscious

* To Spalatinus. Jul. 1521.

† Spalatinus.

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of defeat or of victory, they are more accustomed to abstain from gross and indecent language; yet even then, in its place there is often manifested on the one hand an affectation of coolness and indifference, and perhaps an attempt at strokes of irony, which sufficiently bespeak the wounded spirit of the vanquished; and on the other, an insolent and contemptuous sort of clemency, which as it originates in the pride and palpable superiority of the conqueror, proves more hurtful to the feelings of an antagonist than could any hard words or disgusting allusions. If Martin Luther had lived in our times, and had not learnt, through the influence of the precious doctrines which he taught, to bridle and regulate better his disposition to resentment, yet would he probably have managed his replies and rejoinders with a more decorous disguise; but it does not thence follow, that he would either have experienced less turbulence of passion in his own mind, or have produced less painful sensations in the minds of his adversaries, though these might have been less obvious, because designedly more concealed. The internal heat and fury of a combustion, when confined by powerful obstacles, is not to be estimated by the little blaze and smoke which affect the senses.

Death of Leo X. Dec. 1521.

In the month of December of this same year, at the age of forty-six, died Leo. X., a pontiff renowned for his encouragement of literature and the fine arts; on which account his name has been transmitted to posterity in the most adulatory strains of Erasmus and many others*. He has been charged, on good authority, with a profane contempt, or at least neglect of religion†. Some would represent him as a deep and penetrating politician; while others, after acknowledging his good natural endowments, trace the voluptuary throughout the whole course of his life, ever impatient of care and business, ruining all his faculties both of body and

* See Appendix, Leo X. † Paul Sarpi.

mind, and shortening his existence by excesses. The facts are our surest guides in determining his character; and of these we need not enumerate many. This pope is memorable because of the diminution which the papal authority received through his ignorance, imprudence, and precipitation. Moreover, thousands in contemplating his conduct had learnt to despise his pretensions to the sacred character; and as if Leo had been eager to confirm their prejudices, he issued bulls against heretics, while he himself was dissipating his time and health in prodigal and luxurious pleasures, in the company of debauched cardinals, and in promoting expensive and licentious spectacles at the theatre. Mr. Hume's coolness and moderation in speaking of Leo X. is strikingly curious and entertaining. According to him, it was "his GENEROUS and ENTERPRISING temper" which exhausted his treasury, and obliged him to use every invention which might yield money to support his projects, pleasures, and liberalities. It was also "the penetration of his genius, and his familiarity with ancient literature," that rendered him fully acquainted with "the ridicule and fallacy of the doctrines, which as supreme pontiff he was obliged by his interest to promote;" and therefore we need not wonder that he employed "for his profit those pious frauds" which his predecessors had made use of for their selfish purposes. On the subject of Leo's sale of INDULGENCES, this author makes the following still more extraordinary reflection. Their "sale seems, therefore, no more criminal than any other cheat of the church of Rome, or of any other church. The reformers, by entirely abolishing purgatory, did really, instead of partial indulgences sold by the pope, give gratis a general indulgence of a similar nature for all crimes and offences, without exception or distinction."

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It is quite unnecessary to make any remarks on these and such like passages; they are laid before the student of ecclesiastical history, for the purpose

of making him aware of the astonishing lengths of impiety and misrepresentation to which this elegant historian is generally disposed to go, when he would mitigate the faults of the profane, or deride the sincerity of the believer. Mr. Hume is rarely out of humour with any thing but pure Christianity.

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FROM THE DEATH OF LEO X. to the ELECTION OF ADRIAN IV.

TURBULENCE OF CAROLSTADT.
STORK, MUNZER, &c.
NEW POPE ADRIAN.

IN the first week of the month of March 1522, Luther left his Patmos and returned to Wittemberg, without the consent or even the knowledge of his patron and protector, Frederic. The active spirit of the Reformer ill brooked his long confinement, and moreover, the distracted state of the infant protestant church absolutely required his presence. Already he had once ventured out of his asylum, and made a short visit to Wittemberg, without the privity of the elector; but matters were now daily becoming more critical; and as Luther had resolved, at the hazard of his life, to resume again his character of a public actor in the concerns of religion, he immediately acquainted his prince with the bold step he had taken, and the motives which compelled him no longer to remain a concealed spectator of transactions which oppressed his mind with the most painful apprehensions for the credit of the dawning reformation *.

The excessive and even dangerous zeal of Carolstadt was one of the afflicting causes which in-

* See page 24 of this Vol.

fluenced the conduct of Luther on this occasion. Carolstadt was a professor at Wittemberg of considerable learning and ability, who had exposed the papal tyranny and superstition with great spirit, and, in general, deserved well of the Protestant cause. His name, though not specifically mentioned in the damnatory bull against Luther, was well known at Rome; and through the malicious instigation of Eckius, whom he had opposed in the Leipsic disputation *, he had been suspended from all communion with the church †. This useful colleague of the great Reformer, soon discovered, during the absence of his master, a temerity of judgment and a violence of temper which absolutely disqualified him for the helm in the present tempestuous conjuncture. Not content with promoting in a legal and quiet way, the auspicious beginnings of reformation which had already appeared at Wittemberg, in the gradual omission and rejection of the private mass and other popish superstitions, he headed a multitude of unthinking impetuous youths, inflamed their minds by popular harangues, and led them on to actions the most extravagant and indefensible. They entered the great church of All Saints, brake in pieces the crucifixes and other images, and threw down the altars. Such indecent and irregular conduct by no means becomes those, who profess themselves the disciples of the Prince of Peace: and though in the midst of his excesses, the sincerity of Carolstadt's endeavours to rectify the abuses of popery is not to be questioned, one cannot but lament that the same man, whose sagacity had penetrated the veil of papal delusion in many instances, should in others be distinguished also for a want of plain sense, and ordinary discretion.—It may be proper to give a brief detail of the circumstances which led to these outrageous proceedings.

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Turbulence of Carolstadt.

Honest Carolstadt, mistaking the true meaning

* See Vol. iv. † Com. Luth. lxxv.

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of Matthew xi. 25. where our Lord says, "I thank thee, O Father, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes," rashly concluded that human learning was useless, if not injurious, to a student of the Scriptures. He frequented the shops of the lowest mechanics, and consulted them about the meaning of the Scriptures. He would be called no longer by the appellation of Doctor, or any other honourable title. He lived in a village, employed himself in rustic occupations, and maintained, that thinking persons stood in no need of learning, but had better labour with their hands. In consequence of his example and conversation, the young academics of Wittemberg left the university, and ceased to pursue their studies; and even the schools of the boys were deserted. Such proceedings were manifestly conducive to the excesses above mentioned, and in every view extremely hurtful to the nascent reformation which was happily making rapid advances in various parts of Christendom. We have seen* that the Augustine friars of Wittemberg had begun to abolish the celebration of PRIVATE MASSES, and that Luther was pleased with the news, and employed his pen against that popish corruption. The elector, on the contrary, appears to have been alarmed on the occasion, and to have deputed one of his counsellors† to signify to the church and university of Wittemberg, That his highness had been informed of many innovations and alterations in the ecclesiastical usage, which were taking place every day at Wittemberg; and in particular, that the Augustinians had omitted to celebrate the customary masses. Six persons from among the canons and the academics‡ were chosen to examine this matter, who, in a written report, not only expressed

* Page 5. † Pontanus.

‡ Justus Jonas, Philip Melancthon, Nic. Amsdorff, John Dolta, Jerome Scurff, Andrew Carolstadt.

their approbation in general of what had been done, but boldly and solemnly exhorted the prince to put an end, throughout his whole territory, to the popish profanation of the Lord's Supper. "It became him," they said, "as a Christian prince, to act with dignity and spirit in such an affair; and not to regard the name of Heretic or of Hussite, which might be applied to him. Whoever faithfully supported the laborious and dangerous cause of the gospel, must expect much abuse and much reproach. Jesus Christ required this service from him. He had deigned to illumine with the knowledge of the truth the mind of the elector of Saxony more than any other of the princes; and his highness would do well to remember, that in the day of judgment God would call him to a severe account of the use of the talents committed to his care." CENT. XVI.

To this, the elector directed the following answer to be given by professor Beyer. "That he wished to conduct himself in every thing like a Christian prince, and leave nothing undone which might promote the glory of God and tend to the better establishment of evangelical truth. But that the alteration proposed appeared to be a matter of great consequence, which called for the mature deliberation of the whole church, and ought not to be precipitately decided by a small number. If their advice was sound, doubtless it would be followed by others, and he might then undertake to begin the change with some prospect of steady success.—That he had yet to learn, when the present mode of celebrating mass was introduced into the church,—perhaps several centuries ago; as also when the apostolic usage ceased. That as many churches and monasteries had been founded for the express purpose of saying masses, it deserved their consideration, whether, upon the abolition of masses, the REVENUES of the said foundations might not be withheld. Lastly, that as they did not seem The elector's answer by professor Beyer.

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inclined to take his advice, he owned himself to be only a lay person, and not skilled in Scripture, and intreated them, therefore, to consult calmly with their brethren, the rulers of the church and of the university, and so to settle the business, that no tumults or seditions might ensue."

Rejoinder of the deputies.

The above-mentioned six deputies in their rejoinder adhered to the opinion they had already given, namely, that the abuses of the private masses ought to be abolished; and this, they believed, might be done without tumult or danger; but if not, the evil was so great, that it ought to be removed without any regard to the scandal or defamation which might be the consequence. That though the reformers were but a small part of the church, they had the word of God on their side; and this single consideration was paramount to every other, being an authority to which the angels and all created beings ought to bow. From the beginning of the world, it had always been found that only a very small part of mankind acknowledged the truth. Did not Christ himself commit the preaching of the Gospel to a few weak, despised, unlettered persons? and did not a similar dispensation take place at this very day? The true use and nature of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, together with many other points in religion, was most expressly laid down in the Gospel; notwithstanding which, the dignified priests, and the wise ones of this world, either from interested motives or complete blindness, continued to oppose the truth, and refused to accede to the most reasonable and pious reformations, they only excepted, whose eyes it had pleased God to open by a heavenly illumination. The ancient colleges and monasteries, they said, even to the time of Augustine and Bernard, were founded, not for the purpose of saying a number of masses and babbling the canonical hours, but for the instruction of youth and the care of the poor. It was to the constitution of

the more recent foundations, almost universally, that the present mode of celebrating masses was owing. Moreover, these foundations required a certain number of masses to be said every week by particular persons; and as this was a practice in itself absolutely sinful, the consciences of men ought to be completely released from such fetters without delay. And even if a certain number of masses were not specified, still the very principle on which the masses are celebrated,—namely, that they are good works, or sacrifices, or satisfactions for sin which will therefore appease Almighty God and be useful to others, and even to the dead,—is so contrary to sound doctrine, that they ought to be laid aside. The founders of these ordinances, if they could rise from the dead, would condemn what they themselves had done in this respect, and lament their own credulity, when they saw that these their donations had originated in the avarice of the ecclesiastics. Lastly, it appeared from the history of the church, that even to the time of Cyprian, the ancient custom of communicating in BOTH KINDS was preserved; and that in Greece and the Eastern churches the same truly apostolic practice obtained at this day. Therefore it was not their fault, if on account of certain alterations which were become absolutely necessary, some differences, or even tumults, should arise; these were rather to be laid at the door of the persons, who, for the sake of keeping up their dignity, their income, and their luxurious tables, continued to obstruct the light of the truth, and cruelly to wage war against the altars of God. They then added in most explicit terms, that if their ecclesiastical and civil rulers would but permit the sacred word of God to be publicly preached, heard, and read, even though they did not assent to the truth, but opposed it with all the arguments they could produce, provided they did not inflict cruel punishments on their adversaries, there would be neither

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sedition, nor discord, nor tumult. However, the right Christian rule was, neither to regard the madness of the enemy, nor the greatness of the danger. Christ did not hold his tongue, though he foresaw that the preaching of the Gospel would certainly be attended with discords, seditions, and the revolution of kingdoms; nor were his apostles more negligent and timid, or less strenuous in instructing the people, because the wise men of this world at that time detested the very name of the Gospel, and looked upon it as the firebrand of those disturbances, schisms, and tumults, which raged among the Jews with so much fury at Jerusalem.

Satan, no doubt, would put men in mind of the various dangers to which they might be exposed, in order that he might the more effectually obstruct the progress of that religion, which he so perfectly hates. But as it is well known that such are his devices, they ought not to be much alarmed at these his frightful suggestions, but each of them keep to his post, like good soldiers in the field, and commit the event to God. They must expect desertions, but they should also remember their Lord's words, "Whosoever loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me *."

A serious argumentative statement like this would, doubtless, much affect the tender conscience of the elector of Saxony, but probably not determine that cautious prince to come to any positive decision respecting the ecclesiastical innovations. Accordingly, he appears to have connived at the proceedings of these bold reformers, but by no means to have sanctioned them.

It was precisely in this situation of things, when, for the purpose of silencing calumny and misrepresentation, a discreet and due regard to order was most peculiarly called for, that the violent spirit of Carolstadt broke out into the mischievous excesses

* Luth. Op. II. Comment. Luth. cxxx.

above described*. Already he had done his utmost to discredit at Wittemberg the studies of literature, for the advancement of which, as subservient to the best of causes, Luther and Melancthon had much exerted themselves. He now ventured to administer the sacrament publicly in both kinds to all ranks and orders of persons, under all circumstances, and without due inquiry or preparation, or regard to any of the usual ceremonies. The senate and also the university of Wittemberg complained of these things in severe terms to the elector, who feeling himself unequal to the difficulty, directed his commissioners to interpose, and, with the consent of all parties, to effect such regulations as the circumstances required. These regulations were so favourable to the new system, that Frederic declared his commissioners had gone further than he had intended, and that they must not allege his mandate for what they had done. He said, he did not choose their alterations to be imputed to him; for it was known they were contrary to the commands of the imperial government; and it was also known, that the bishops were about to commence a visitation of his electorate.

In this convention, it was ordered,—1st. That all persons who were penitent and wished to be in the favour of God, should be exhorted to partake in the sacrament.—2dly. The popish notion of the mass being a sacrifice was entirely rejected; And 3dly. Steps were taken for the removal of the images out of the great church. These, surely, were very considerable amendments; and it is not to be wondered at, if they should have alarmed a German prince of no great power, who stood almost alone, who was himself far from having clear views in religion, and who had to contend with the Pope, the emperor, and the neighbouring potentates, leagued in opposition against the free progress of the Gospel.

Regulations of the convention.

* Page 33.

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Nevertheless, the violent and impatient spirit of Carolstadt remained dissatisfied with these triumphs of the truth, and there is too much reason for lamenting that an alloy of pride and ungovernable self-will should have sadly debased the honest Christian zeal of this early reformer. He even avowed to Melancthon that he wished to be as great and as much thought of as Luther. Melancthon told him, that was the language of pride, envy, and unchristian emulation. But Carolstadt was deaf to admonition. He openly professed to have not the least regard for the authority of any human being. He said, he would stick close to the simple word of God, and that no man could be a Christian who found fault with what he did. How deceitful is the human heart, and how inconsistent a creature is fallen man! Carolstadt, with much Christian light in his understanding, and with abundance of honest zeal in his heart, at the very time that he was making pretensions to an uncommon purity of motive and doctrine, and to an extraordinary respect for the Scriptures, proceeded from one disorderly act to another, till at length he committed those outrages which afforded a considerable handle for complaint to the enemies of the reformation, and made its best friends ashamed of their rash and presumptuous coadjutor.

Violence of Carolstadt.

It will now be some relief to the reader's mind to peruse Luther's observations on these transactions. The report of them reached him in his Patmos, and he wrote to the elector of Saxony thus:

Luther's letter from his Patmos.

"There is no reason to be frightened. Rather give praise to God; and rejoice in the certain expectation that all will end well. Things of this kind always happen to those who endeavour to spread the Gospel. We must not only expect Annas and Caiaphas to rage against us; but even a Judas to appear among the apostles, and Satan himself

among the sons of God. Be wise, and look deeper than to the external appearance. Other agents; besides those which are merely human, are at work. Don't be afraid, but be prepared for more events of this sort. This is only the beginning of the business: Satan intends to carry matters much further yet. Believe me in what I now say; I am but a plain, simple man; however, I know something of HIS arts. Suffer the world to clamour against us, and to pass their harsh judgments. Be not so much concerned at the falling away of particular Christians. Even holy Peter fell; and also others of the apostles. Doubt not but they will in a short time rise again, as surely as Christ himself rose from the dead. The words of St. Paul to the Corinthians* are at this moment peculiarly applicable to our circumstances, namely, 'that we should approve ourselves, as the ministers of God, in much patience, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours.'"

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Luther concluded his letter with an earnest request for leave to print and to circulate his own writings; and with saying that he intended to be very soon at Wittemberg.

Sentiments of the Elector.

The religious mind of Frederic was deeply affected by these sentiments of Luther; and he immediately commissioned one of his confidential magistrates to relate to him in his asylum the particulars of all the late proceedings at Wittemberg: How the pupils dwindled in number, and were called away by their guardians; how anxious the prince was, and how completely in doubt what course to take. That nothing was so distressing to his mind as the prospect of seditious tumults, but that the imperial government tied up his hands; and moreover, that the bishops had promised they would themselves preach the Gospel, and also would appoint proper missionaries for that purpose, and that it was impossible for him to oppose their laudable reso-

* 2 Cor. v.

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lutions. He wished exceedingly to have Luther's advice at this crisis, but exhorted him not to think of coming to Wittemberg. The Pope and emperor would insist on his being delivered up to them, which would be the severest stroke that could happen to the elector: Yet he did not see how he could prevent it. He had never undertaken, nor had Luther desired him, nor was it indeed in his power to do more, than to procure him a fair hearing. In one point, however, he was absolutely determined, namely, if he could but find out what was the divine will, he would cheerfully bear, suffer, do, or avoid doing, every thing which should appear to be his duty agreeably to that will. In a word, he remembered who said, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light," and he would willingly bear, through the divine strength and help, the cross that God should lay upon him. The transactions at Wittemberg were most surprising: new sects arose there every day, and it was hard to say which were gaining or which losing ground. The Diet were to assemble at Nuremberg in a short time; and it was expected that much would be said and done respecting Luther's business: He had better therefore be quiet and remain in secret for the present: Considerable revolutions were at hand; and if it should happen, that the sacred Gospel was obstructed, such a turn in the events would be matter of the greatest grief and mourning to the elector.

The commissioner concluded all he had to say with the most kind, faithful, and affectionate assurances of the prince's friendship for Luther.

The judicious reader will easily anticipate the inferences to be drawn from this very interesting narrative.

He will observe the elector of Saxony to be on all occasions the same man; thoughtful, temperate, and pious; approving, in the main, and even admiring Luther; but suspicious of his impetuous

temper; and doubtful in some points, as to the line both of duty and of prudence respecting his own conduct. CENT. XVI.

He will be aware of the effect, which the confusions at Wittemberg would naturally produce on the mind of such a prince. They must have increased his disposition to extreme caution, hesitation and suspense of judgment.

Lastly, he will not forget, that the historian, in his relation of these documents, so secret at the time of the transactions, and even now so very little known, is thus extremely minute, chiefly for the purpose of explaining why Luther determined to leave his Patmos at this critical and dangerous moment. The propagation of pure Christianity and the salvation of men's souls appear to have been not only his primary but his sole objects. So long as he considered himself in the pursuit of THESE, "he counted not even his life dear to him*."

The conscientious Frederic, surrounded as he was at home with timid courtiers, and opposed abroad by bigoted dukes and princes, and still more by self-interested popes and prelates, failed to support the cause of truth in the manner that Luther wished. This reformer, from principle, uniformly resisted the smallest approach to the use of force or violence in spreading the Gospel; but the very same principle induced him earnestly to solicit the elector to interfere with his authority and prevent the infliction of pains and penalties on those who favoured the new system. He begged also, that the preaching of evangelical doctrine might be less fettered, and would gladly have obtained some small stipends for the support of such poor clergy as had left their monasteries, and, at the call of the congregations, had become faithful ministers of the Gospel. But almost all Luther's petitions of this species, though by no means coldly received, were inefficiently com-

* Acts, xx. 24.

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plied with by Frederic; who daily found it expedient to adhere to his prudential maxims with a more deliberate circumspection than ever. The papal powers were cruel, artful, and active: The reformers, for the most part, were unskilful politicians; and some of them, as Carolstadt and his associates, extremely injudicious and headstrong; the fair prospect of reformation grew dark and cloudy; the tempest thickened, and it became absolutely necessary that the most skilful pilot should repair to the helm.

Stork, Munzer, &c.

Besides the turbulent behaviour of Carolstadt and the other causes, which have been mentioned, of difficulty and confusion in the church, there took place at the same time another event which threatened consequences perhaps still more pressing and dangerous, and loudly called for the presence of Luther.—Several persons, who really deserved the name of enthusiasts, had appeared in Saxony; among whom Nicholas Stork, Mark Stubner, Martin Cellary, and Thomas Munzer, have, by their follies, obtained a memorial in history. Stork was a baker at Zwickau, who had selected, from his acquaintance of the same calling, twelve whom he called apostles, and also seventy-two disciples. The other three, in a tumultuous manner, harangued the populace in the church of St. Catharine of the same town. Nicholas Hausman, the pious pastor of the place, resisted these insane prophets to the best of his power, but could not controul their fury.—They professed themselves to have a divine commission, and pretended to visions and inspirations. Munzer, in particular, will be found at the head of a REBELLION OF THE PEASANTS in 1525. At present it may be best to hear Melancthon's account of them in a letter to the elector of Saxony.—"Your highness must excuse the liberty I take; the occasion is urgent, and calls exceedingly for your highness's attention. Your highness is aware of the many

dangerous dissensions, which have distracted your city of Zwickau, on the subject of religion. Some persons have been cast into prison there for their seditious innovations. Three of the ringleaders are come hither. Two of them are ignorant mechanics, the third is a man of letters. I have given them a hearing; and it is astonishing what they tell of themselves; namely, that they are positively sent by God to teach; that they have familiar conferences with God; that they can foretel events; and to be brief, that they are on a footing with prophets and apostles. I cannot describe how I am moved by these lofty pretensions. I see strong reasons for not despising the men; for it is clear to me there is in them something more than a mere human spirit; but whether the spirit be of God or not, none, except Martin, can easily judge. Therefore, for the peace and reputation of the church, Martin should, I think, by all means, have an opportunity of examining them, and the rather as they appeal to him." CENT. XVI.

The elector, who did not consider himself as competent to decide on such cases, and whom we always find constantly disposed to follow the will of God, so far as he knew it, inquired more particularly into the circumstances of the matter, and also called in the advice of some of his most learned counsellors. These could come to no decision: They felt the same doubt, which Melancthon had expressed; and were afraid of sinning against God by condemning his choicest servants. Upon which Frederic astonished all his ministers and counsellors then present*, by hastily making the following declaration. "This is a most weighty and difficult case; which I, as a layman, do not comprehend. If I rightly understood the matter, so as to see my duty, most certainly I would not knowingly resist the will of Almighty God: no; rather than do that,

* Spalatinus was also present at the conference, from whose MS. this account is taken.

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—though God hath given me and my brother a considerable share of power and wealth, I would take my staff, and quit every thing I possess."—Such was the integrity and tenderness of conscience of this prince! Many in Saxony also at that time seem to have feared God in like manner; and were brought to the light of the Gospel. That light, however, for the most part was dim as yet; and crafty hypocrites knew how to take advantage of the want of discernment in godly souls.

Melancthon pressed the elector still further to call in the assistance of Luther's judgment. "No person," he said, "could manage the business so well; Stork and his associates had raised disputes concerning the baptism of infants, and had appealed to the supernatural revelations they had had from God; and that in regard to himself, he was by no means qualified to pronounce sentence in so difficult a cause."

The elector, in pursuance of his cautious and conscientious views, directed Melancthon to avoid disputes with these men; and to use every precaution for preventing such tumultuous proceedings as had happened at Zwickau. "He was himself," he said, "no interpreter of the Holy Scriptures, nor did he know whom he ought to appoint to examine the merits of the pretensions in question; but it was then impossible to recall Luther without imminent danger to the person of that reformer. Luther was his subject, and he had so far supported him that he should not be condemned unheard; but beyond that point he could not go; for he felt it incumbent upon himself to obey the emperor, who was his lord and master. With respect to the fanatics, however, he had this to say, that if he could but see clearly what justice required, he was ready to discharge his duty at every hazard *."—In this state of doubt and suspense, Melancthon employed persons to procure

* Seck. Addit. p. 193.

the best information they could; and in the mean time he treated Stubner, who was a man of some learning, with hospitality, and meekly bore his fooleries, till the arrival of Luther, whose wise and manly treatment of the enthusiasts quickly, as we shall soon see, exposed the emptiness of their claims to a divine commission, and demolished all their authority and influence.

Luther's advice respecting the prophets.

This sound divine having been informed in his Patmos of the extraordinary pretensions of these men, had all along beheld their conduct with a jealous eye; and had answered the inquiries of Melancthon with much discretion. "As you are my superior," said he, "both in discernment and erudition, I cannot commend your timidity in regard to these prophets. In the first place, when they bear record of themselves, we ought not implicitly to believe them; but rather to try the spirits, according to St. John's advice. As yet, I hear of nothing done or said by them, which exceeds the imitative powers of Satan. It is my particular wish that you would examine whether they can produce any PROOF of having a divine commission. For God never sent any prophet, who was not either called by proper persons, or authorized by special miracles, no, not even his own Son. Their bare assertion of a divine AFFLATUS, is not a sufficient ground for your receiving them; since God did not even choose to speak to Samuel, but with the sanction of Eli's authority. So much for their pretensions to a public character.—In the next place, I would wish you to sift their private spirit,—whether they have experienced any internal distresses of soul, the attacks of death and hell, and the comforts of the new birth unto righteousness. If you hear nothing from them but smooth, tranquil, and, forsooth, what they call, devout, religious contemplations, regard them not; for there is wanting the characteristic of the Son of Man, of the Man of sorrows; there is wanting the

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Cross, the only touchstone of Christians, and the sure discerner of spirits. Would you know the place, the time, the manner of divine conferences and communications? Hear the written word, 'As a lion will he break all my bones *.' And 'I am cast out of the sight of thine eyes. My soul is full of trouble, and my life draweth nigh unto hell.' The majesty of the Divine Being speaks not IMMEDIATELY, in a way that man should see HIM: None can see HIM and live. Do you try them therefore carefully, and listen not even to a glorified Jesus, unless you find he was first crucified."

I follow with close attention the progress of infant protestantism, because I am persuaded no scene was ever more instructive since the apostolic times. It will not be necessary to watch the reformation so closely, when it became more involved in civil transactions and was advanced into secular consequence. The purest christianity is generally in the outset of religious revivals, though it often happens, that together with the most scriptural displays of light and holiness, there appears also the wild fire of fanaticism and delusion. It was even so in the Apostles' days. But how absurdly do sceptics conclude from the disgraceful conduct of such men as Stork, Stubner, and their companions, that enthusiasm marked the whole progress of Lutheranism, when, perhaps, no man was ever more remote from that dangerous spirit, than the Saxon theologian himself! It is, indeed, no small exercise of patience to faithful pastors, that while they are guarding their flocks with the utmost solicitude against gross cheats or fanatical illusions, they themselves should be uncharitably accused of supporting these things.

The true motives of Luther's quitting his Patmos are now before the reader; namely, on the one hand, the indiscreet and even mutinous conduct of certain sincere friends of the reformation; and on

* Isaiah, xxxviii. 13.

the other, the conscientious timidity* of the elector of Saxony, most lamentably manifesting itself both in not repressing the wild freaks of genuine enthusiasm which had produced so much disturbance, as also in not supporting with vigour the diligent and enlightened clergy of the poorer sort, who not only laboured without salaries, but were often imprisoned and otherwise severely punished for marrying wives, administering the communion in both kinds, preaching Luther's sentiments, and, in general, for transgressing any of the rules and customs of the Romish church†. CENT. XVI.

Every part of this account is in perfect harmony with the numerous letters of Luther, written near the time of his return to Wittemberg, and also with other fragments of curious and secret history relative to these interesting transactions. They are, indeed, transactions, which well deserve the most diligent attention; in that, they have, as yet, never been distinctly and collectively detailed by any writer, and also as they throw much light on the principles and conduct both of Luther and his prince. "The whole world," says the excellent Seckendorf on this occasion, "cannot produce such an example of

* Luther, in one of his letters to Spalatinus, rallies his friend respecting the prince's excessive caution on the following occasion. The reformation had proceeded so far, that several of the divines at Wittemberg had married wives in the course of the year 1522. Among these was the protestant John Bugenhagius; and Luther had requested the elector to give this worthy man some little present at the time of his marriage. The present came, together with a piece of venison, but not as sent from the prince, but from Spalatinus, and there was also added an injunction of secrecy.—Luther, in returning thanks, said, "We will keep the thing secret, don't fear. We knew perfectly well before you gave this caution, that the present would come from YOU, not from the PRINCE." See the Appendix. Bugenhagius.

† In a letter to Melancthon, Luther mentions an additional reason which moved him to return home; namely, his translation of the Bible into the German language. This was a great and very important work, in the execution of which he stood in need of the help of his friends. Melch. Adam.

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firmness, as appeared in the Reformer; a firmness too which carried along with it the evident marks of divine grace, and which withstood effectually, during the remainder of his life, all the machinations of his enemies."

Luther was at Borna, on his road to Wittemberg, when he wrote, to the elector, the letter above alluded to in page 32; and it is sufficiently manifest from the letter itself, that he had received the kind warnings sent to him by Frederic, not to leave his asylum in the present dangerous circumstances. But neither the affectionate caution of his friends, nor the cruel threats of his enemies, could induce the Saxon hero to depart in the smallest degree from what he thought a well-marked line of duty. He wrote in substance as follows; "That the accounts of what had passed at Wittemberg had almost reduced him to a state of despair. That every thing he had as yet suffered was comparatively mere jests and boys play. He could not enough lament, or express his disapprobation of those tumultuous proceedings: the Gospel was in imminent danger of being disgraced from this cause. That, in regard to himself, he wished the elector to understand most distinctly, that ALL HIS HOPE AND CONFIDENCE depended most entirely on the justice of his cause. The Gospel which he defended and propagated was by no means a device of his own, but a heavenly gift from Jesus Christ our Lord; that himself therefore was a servant of Christ, and a teacher of the Gospel, and that in future he intended to go by no other name. Hitherto, continued he, I have offered myself for public examination and inquiry; not indeed from any necessity, but because I had hoped that so much humility on my part, might be an inducement to others to listen to the truth. But now that I see plainly, this extreme moderation is, by Satanic art, turned to the disadvantage of the Gospel, I mean no longer to concede in the manner I have done

Remarkable Letter of Luther to the Elector.

during the last year,—not, however, through fear of danger, but from respect for my prince. When I entered WORMS, I dreaded not the innumerable powers of hell; and surely this hostile duke George of Leipsic* is not equal in strength or skill to a single infernal spirit. Moreover, the faithful derive from the Gospel such a fund of courage and comfort, that they are allowed to invoke God as their father. Well therefore may I despise the vengeance of this enraged duke. Indeed, were the city of Leipsic itself in the same condition that Wittemberg is, I would not hesitate to go there, though I were assured that for nine days together the heavens would pour down duke Georges, every one of which would be many times more cruel than the present duke of that name. As it has pleased God to permit this same duke George to treat Jesus Christ with the utmost indignity, it was doubtless my duty to submit;—nay, I have prayed for him often, and will again pray for him; though I am persuaded he would kill me with a single word if it were in his power.—I write these things, that your highness may know, I consider myself, in returning to Wittemberg, to be under a far more powerful protection than any which the elector of Saxony can afford me. To be plain, I do not wish to be protected by your highness. It never entered my mind to request your defence of my person. Nay, it is my decided judgment, that, on the contrary, your highness will rather receive support and protection from the prayers of Luther and the good cause in which he is embarked. It is a cause which does not call for the help of the sword. God himself will take care of it

* The imperial government at Nuremberg had lately issued, in the emperor's absence, and during the confinement of Luther, an edict against the Reformer's principles; and, in consequence, George duke of Saxony, who had been present in the assembly, and instrumental in obtaining the edict and making it as severe as possible, was beginning to persecute, with the greatest cruelty, all persons who adhered to Lutheranism.

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without human aid. I positively declare, that if I knew your highness intended to defend me by force, I would not now return to Wittemberg. This is a case where God alone should direct: and men should stand still and wait the event without anxiety; and that man will be found to defend both himself and others the most bravely, who has the firmest confidence in God. Your highness has but a very feeble reliance on God; and for that reason I cannot think of resting my defence and hopes of deliverance on you. Still you wish to know WHAT YOUR DUTY IS IN THIS BUSINESS, and you express a fear that you may not have been sufficiently active. My answer is, you have already done TOO MUCH, and that at present you ought to do nothing. God does not allow, that either your highness or myself should defend the cause of truth by force. If you do but believe this, you will be quite safe;—but if not, my faith on this head will remain unshaken, and I shall be compelled to leave you a prey to that anxiety which will attend your incredulity. If I should be taken, or even put to death, you must stand excused, even in the judgment of my best friends, because I have not followed your advice. Think not of opposing the emperor by force: permit him to do what he pleases with the lives and properties of your subjects. It seems impossible, however, that he should require you to be my executioner, when all the world know the privileges which belong to the place of my nativity. But if so unreasonable a demand should be made, and your highness would make me acquainted with the fact, I will engage,—whether you do or not believe me,—that no harm shall happen to your highness on my account, either in body, or mind, or estate. Be assured, this business is decided in the councils of heaven in a very different manner from what it is by the regency at Nuremberg; and we shall shortly see that those who now dream they have absolutely devoured the Gospel, have not as yet even

begun their imaginary feast. There is another Being, abundantly more powerful than the duke George, with whom I have to do. This Being knows me perfectly well; and I trust I have a little knowledge of HIM. If your illustrious highness could but believe this, you would see the glory of God. But you remain in darkness through your unbelief.—Glory and praise be to God for evermore*!" CENT. XVI.

So extraordinary a letter has rarely been penned by a subject and transmitted to a kind prince, whose directions he was at that moment positively disobeying. But Luther saw a DIVINE HAND in this whole struggle for Christian liberty! As to Frederic, we see him trembling for the safety of Luther; and uneasy in his conscience lest he should desert the cause of God. What this wise prince would have done, in case Charles V. had seriously demanded Luther's person to be given up to the papal vengeance, it may be hard to say. His prudential maxims constantly led him to evade such a crisis if possible; and as he was well acquainted with the activity, and also the violence of Luther's disposition, nothing could be more natural than for him, through the medium of his confidential friends and agents, to have said, "Remain in your asylum for the present; you are under a sentence of condemnation, and you had better not provoke your enemies to execute it. The duke George who lives at Leipsic is your inveterate enemy, and it seems you have heard of the severe edict of Nuremberg†. It is not in my power to defend you beyond a certain point. Moreover, were I disposed to use force, I might lose my life and property in contending with a potentate so powerful as the emperor of Germany. Still I would not shrink from my duty. Tell me plainly what you think I ought to do: perhaps I have been too timid in this momentous affair."

* Comment. Luth. cxix. Melch. Adam. Soultet. 104.

† The chief palace of this duke was at Dresden; but he was often at Leipsic. See Vol. iv.

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The preceding letter of Luther's must evidently appear to have been written in reply to such previous admonitions and observations as these;—even though the greater part of them were not actually to be found among the several documents already before the reader.

The elector, upon receiving this answer, was astonished at the intrepidity of the Reformer; and no doubt concluded, that, on his own part, the most consummate care and caution were never more called for than at the present juncture, for the purpose of tempering the impetuosity and fervour of the determinations of the man, whom, however, it was impossible he should not both admire and love. He therefore did not choose to communicate in writing his sentiments to Luther himself, but directed a trusty agent, Jerome Schurff*, to say and do every thing which he wished to have said and done in this delicate business. Accordingly, Schurff visited Luther, and after assuring him of the kindness and good will of the elector, informed him, it was his highness's desire, that he should compose a letter to him in a somewhat different style from the former; a letter, for example, which he might show to his friends, and to the princes, and to the other great men of the country. In this letter he was to give the reasons which had induced him to return to Wittemberg, and he might openly avow that he had taken this step without the orders of his prince; at the same time he ought to make a decent declaration, that he certainly intended to put no person whatever to inconvenience. Schurff concluded with saying, That the elector's entire meaning was to prevent sedition; that he anxiously desired most particular care to be taken in that respect; and, therefore, for the present he would have Luther to abstain from preaching in the great church where the late tumult had happened; and lastly, he requested that this whole negotiation might be kept a profound secret.

Luther visited by Schurff.

* The same person who was Luther's advocate at Worms.

Schurff, in his answer to the elector, praised Luther to the skies; he looked on him as an apostle and an evangelist of Christ. He said, all ranks and orders, learned and unlearned, were delighted with the return of the man, who was now daily, in the most admirable manner, teaching true doctrine, and restoring order every where. Lastly, he informed the elector, that he found Luther completely disposed to write such a letter as had been desired. CENT. XVI.

In fact, Luther transmitted, through the medium of Schurff, a copy of the required letter, and left it to the elector to make such alterations as he should think necessary; but he added at the same time these remarkable words, "That most certainly he would not consent to do any thing which would not bear the light: that for his part, he should not be afraid, even if his former letter were made public; and that in regard to seditious tumults and commotions, he owned he had hitherto supposed, that the ecclesiastics would be the greatest sufferers; but on a diligent review of sacred history, he had been led to a different opinion. It had always happened, he said, that the princes and rulers were themselves the first sacrifices to popular fury;—however, not before they had corrupted themselves, and ceased to support the true religion."

Frederic in a few days informed Schurff, that there were in Luther's letter a few expressions which were rather too strong, and which therefore he wished him to alter. Luther assented.

The letter stands in the Latin edition of Luther's works without alteration, and is in substance to this effect:

"Most illustrious Prince, and most kind Master;

I have very diligently considered, that, in returning to Wittemberg without the permission of your clemency, and even without so much as asking that

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permission, it was my bounden duty to take care that this step should in no way prove injurious to your clemency. For I am well aware, that, with some appearance of truth, my conduct is capable of being represented as causing a multitude of dangers and difficulties to your person, to your government, and to your subjects; and more especially to myself, —being one, who has reason every hour to expect a violent death from the imperial edicts, and the papal thunders. However, what can I do? The most urgent reasons compel me to this step; the Divine will is plain, and leaves me no choice. I must not act a double part to please any creature in existence. Then be it so; come what will, I return to Wittemberg in the name of Jesus Christ, who is the Lord of life and death.

That your clemency may not be ignorant of the just grounds of my conduct, I have determined to state faithfully the principal motives which have influenced my mind in this business.

But in the first place, I would beg leave to deprecate every supposition, which proceeds on the idea of my being moved by pride, or a contempt for the authority either of the emperor, or of your clemency, or of any magistrate. For though it may sometimes happen that the orders of human governments cannot be complied with; for example, when such orders are directly repugnant to the word of God, yet there is NO case where THE POWERS THAT BE are to be DESPISED. They are ever to be treated with the greatest respect. So did Jesus Christ; who, though he abhorred the sentence of Pilate, did not on that account either hurl Cæsar from his throne, or treat his representative with insolent language.

1. My first motive is, I am called back by the letters of the church and people of Wittemberg, and this—with much solicitation and entreaty. Now, since there is no denying that the reformation, which

has already taken place in that church, has been effected through my instrumentality, and since I cannot but own myself to be, in an especial manner, the minister of the church to which God hath called me, it was impossible for me to refuse a prompt compliance with their request, unless I intended to renounce altogether that labour and fidelity, which belongs to true Christian charity and love of souls. CENT. XVI

There are, indeed, those who throughout execrate our religious emendations, and call them diabolical: but their impieties will not excuse me at the tribunal of God, who will judge me not by other men's consciences, but my own. I am most firmly persuaded, that from the first, my preaching and proceeding to divulge the Gospel of Christ is not of my own motion, but the work of God. Nor, through God's help, shall any kind of death or persecution shake my confidence in this matter; and I believe I rightly divine, when I say that no terror or cruelty will be able to extinguish the light which already has begun to shine.

2. During my absence from Wittemberg, Satan hath made such inroads among my flock, and raised such commotions, as it is not in my power to repress by mere writing. My PRESENCE among my people is absolutely necessary. I must live with them. I must talk to them. I must hear them speak. They must see my mode of proceeding: I must guide them, and do them all the good I can. They are my children in Christ, and my conscience will not permit me to be absent from them any longer. Though I should offend your clemency, or bring upon myself the indignation of the whole world, the pressing necessity of the church ought in my judgment to take place of every other consideration.

3. A third motive is, I am much distressed by a well-grounded apprehension, that some great and violent sedition will arise in Germany, and make that country undergo grievous punishments for its

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contempt and ingratitude towards a kind Providence. We see, indeed, numbers receive the light of the Gospel with lively approbation and thankfulness; yet many are to be found, who abuse the precious gift to carnal purposes. And there are those, who, though it is their duty, by a temperate conduct, to preserve peace and good order, aim at extinguishing every spark of heavenly light by cruel force and persecution; and thus do they madly inflame the bad passions of men, and, though not aware of it, in fact blow the trumpet of sedition. All this tends evidently to the destruction of the country, and without doubt is a heavy judgment of God for the punishment of the inhabitants. My sole object in writing so much was to break to pieces the ecclesiastical system of despotism; and this, in a considerable degree, is done already. I now suspect it to be the Divine will that matters should proceed much farther, as was the case with the Jews, when, on account of their persecution of the Gospel, and other wickednesses, it pleased God to destroy, root and branch, the city of Jerusalem and the whole Jewish constitution, civil and religious. It is only lately that I have begun to see, what, however, I might have seen long ago, because every line of sacred history clearly shows it, namely, that whether the thing be done with a good or a bad grace, not only ecclesiastical and spiritual dominion, but also civil and political constitutions, must, in the end, give way to the Gospel of Christ.

However, since God, through his prophet Ezekiel, requires us to oppose ourselves as a wall for the people, I have judged it needful to obey the Divine command, and, in concert with my friends, to take this matter into our most serious consideration, and to do every thing which we possibly can, in the way of instruction, admonition, and exhortation, to avert, or at least delay for some time, the heavy wrath of God. All I can do, MAY be in

vain, and my enemies may ridicule my attempt; it will nevertheless be my bounden duty to do every thing which I think may tend to promote the laudable end I have in view. For I may venture to add with great truth, and I wish your clemency to be assured of the fact, THAT THE DECISIONS IN THE COUNCILS OF HEAVEN ARE VERY DIFFERENT FROM THOSE WHICH ARE PRONOUNCED IN THE IMPERIAL REGENCY AT NUREMBERG; and we shall soon see that those who now dream they have absolutely devoured the Gospel, have not as yet even begun their imaginary feast. CENT. XVI.

4. I could enumerate many other reasons, upon some of which, however, I do not lay any great stress, because I have not thoroughly considered them. It is enough for me that the Gospel is oppressed, and begins to labour. This single consideration has too much force in it for me to neglect my duty out of regard for any mortal being whatever.

I humbly, therefore, beseech your clemency, for these reasons, to take in good part my return to Wittemberg, without your clemency's knowledge, without having asked leave, and without orders. Your clemency is the Lord of my poor frail body and little fortunes; but Christ is the Lord of the souls which he hath put under my care; and Christ also hath given me a spirit for the work. By no means, therefore, must I desert these souls. I trust my Lord and Master Jesus Christ will show himself more powerful than our enemies, and that he will please to defend and preserve me against all their fury. But if not, may his good will be done! On my account, no danger, no adversity shall happen to your clemency. And this promise I dare engage to fulfil.

MARTIN LUTHER."

Wittemberg,
March 14, 1522.

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One of the expressions in this letter, which the elector desired might be softened, appears to have been that in which a comparison is made between the decisions in the councils of heaven, and those in the assembly at Nuremberg. In the German corrected copy it stands thus, "The decisions in the councils of heaven are very different from those ON EARTH."

From a letter to his friend Spalatinus, we collect, that Luther did not quite relish some of the alterations which the elector had desired to be made. "I am at this moment," says he, "sending my letter to the prince; who, by causing certain phrases therein to be altered according to his own mind, has discovered many marks of timidity, and of want of faith. This infirmity of his I ought to bear; but he has insisted on my using one word which I own does offend me; namely, in that I am directed to call the emperor my most KIND, or most MERCIFUL* Lord, when all the world knows he is to me as hostile as possible; and there is not an individual who will not laugh at this downright hypocrisy; yet I would rather submit to the ridicule and to the imputation of this species of hypocrisy, than thwart the infirmity of the prince in this instance. In regard to my conscience, I quiet that from the charge of insincerity thus: It is now the established custom to address the emperor in that manner; so that those words are to be considered as his proper name and title, to be used by all persons, even those to whom he has the greatest enmity.—After all, I have a most settled aversion to hypocritical and disguised ways of speaking: hitherto I have given way to them quite enough: it is high time I should stand forth, and speak out."

The pious student of the history of the Reformation will not think his time mis-spent in perusing

* Dominum clementissimum.

such instructive documents as these. Their authenticity is indisputable; and they throw more light on the secret springs and movements of infant protestantism, than long chapters of modern speculation concerning the efficacy of secondary causes. It is much to be lamented that they have not as yet found their way into our most celebrated ecclesiastical histories. They have probably been deemed to contain too many religious reflections for the taste of the times. Certainly, it is not to be denied, that they lead the mind to see and adore the kindness and wisdom of an overruling Providence, which, by directing his various instruments according to the counsels of his own will, brought about, during the sixteenth century, the most wonderful and unexpected events in the church. It has often been said, that nothing could have been done without the intrepidity of honest Luther. Let this be admitted; but let it not be added, that "such cautious men as the elector of Saxony could be of no use in the great struggle for Christian liberty." This very prince was the instrument of preserving the life of the intrepid Luther; and it seems utterly improbable that that inestimable life could have been saved during such a storm of papal fury, aided by immense papal power, unless there had been in Frederic THE WISE, besides his extreme caution, an extraordinary assemblage of qualities which added great weight and authority to his character. Whoever reflects on these things with scriptural ideas in his mind, will doubtless see the operation of a divine hand in raising up this excellent prince to preserve Martin Luther from the flames, to which he was condemned by Charles V. and Leo X., as well as in bringing into the scene of public action this eminent Reformer himself at the critical time when there wanted so disinterested and daring a spirit, and so wise an interpreter of the sacred oracles.

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Luther, on his return to Wittemberg, preaches several times.

Luther, on his return to Wittemberg, resumed his favourite employment of preaching. He had to inform the judgment and calm the passions of a distracted multitude. Few persons, however, have been better qualified for the arduous task. He possessed in a very high degree the requisites which the most approved instructors in the art of eloquence have wished their pupils either to be endowed with by nature or to acquire by diligence. There prevailed almost universally a fixed opinion of his unexampled integrity, and of his extraordinary knowledge of the Scriptures. His great skill in the German language has been mentioned before *: to all which, if we add the immense importance of the subjects he had to handle, and his affectionate manner of addressing his countrymen, we may cease to wonder that Luther's discourses from the pulpit should have produced that happy restoration of peace and good order, which, quickly after his arrival at Wittemberg, are known to have taken place both in the town and the university.

The substance of seven of these discourses are to be found in Luther's writings. As no time was to be lost, they were preached in rapid succession: and as it was of immense consequence, in the unsettled state of the minds of the people, that the great Christian rules for a quiet and peaceable conduct, and for submission to authority, should be clearly set forth, forcibly impressed, and well remembered; the preacher, therefore, in these practical harangues was uncommonly grave, concise, and perspicuous. He showed his hearers, with how much charity and tender consideration the weakest brethren should be treated;—that various inconveniences in the external state of the church should be dispensed with, till the minds of men were sufficiently ripened to admit of more improvement;—

* See Vol. iv.

that communion in both kinds ought not to be introduced by force, but that the people should be persuaded to it by substantial arguments; and, that in the mean time those, who pleased, might still adhere to the customary mode, without suffering molestation;—that the existence of images in the church might be tolerated for the present, though he wished to see their total abolition;—that adoration of them, however, ought by no means to be countenanced, but strongly protested against, by every Christian. He reprehended the promiscuous concourse to the Lord's supper, and insisted on a godly preparation, especially a lively faith in the Redeemer, without which the sacrament itself was nugatory.

Luther, on his first appearance in the pulpit, addressed his audience to the following effect. "Once more I am allowed to sound the Gospel in your ears; once more you may derive benefit from my exhortation. By and by death will come, and then we can do one another no good. How necessary therefore is it, that every individual should be furnished with the principles which are to support him at that awful moment! These principles are the great doctrines of Christianity; and by treasuring them up in your memories, you will act like wise men, and be fortified against the attacks of the enemy. I have often explained them to you on former occasions, and you have often granted me a kind and patient hearing. At present I would be as concise as possible.

Firstly; That we are by nature children of wrath, and that all our own thoughts, our affections, and our works, can do us no good, is a fundamental truth, and we should have some solid scriptural passage always at hand to prove it. The Bible is full of passages which imply the very essence of this doctrine; but the third verse of the second chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians is directly to the

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purpose. Fix that verse deep in your mind; 'We are all,' says the apostle, 'children of wrath.' Beware then of saying, I have built a church, I have founded a mass, and such like.

Secondly; The great and good Jehovah sent his only Son to us, that we might believe on him; and that whosoever does believe on him, might be free from the law of sin, and become a child of God. He gave them, says St. John, power to become the sons of God, namely, to those, who should believe on his name. In support of this point also, we should be well furnished with scriptural proofs, with which, as with the shield of Achilles, we may defend ourselves from the darts of the WICKED ONE. However, to confess the truth, I have not observed you to be deficient in the knowledge of either of these two fundamental articles of religion. I have preached on them very often before you; and I am not ashamed to own, that several of you are much more capable than I am of defending them by scriptural authority.

But there is a third point, my dear friends, which we ought earnestly to aim at,—namely, to do good to each other in love; as Christ hath shown his love to us by his works. Without this love, faith is a cold speculation, and of no account. So says St. Paul, 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have all faith, and have not charity, I am nothing.' In this, dear friends, ye are, as yet, greatly defective. Nay, not a single vestige of love can I discover in you; a plain proof, that ye are not grateful to God for his rich mercies.

Beware then lest Wittemberg should become like Capernaum. Ye can discourse excellently on the doctrines which have been preached to you; ye can even dispute acutely concerning charity. But this does not make a Christian. The kingdom of God does not consist in talk, but in power, that is, in works, and in practice. God loves the doers of the

word in faith and love, and not the mere hearers, who, like parrots, have learnt to utter certain expressions with readiness. Once more; faith without love is as it were a dream, an image of faith; just as the appearance of a face in a glass is not a real face. CENT. XVI.

Fourthly, continues Luther, we have need of patience. There must be persecution. Satan never sleeps; but is constantly contriving something that is matter for our patience. Now patience begets hope. The Christian learns entirely to commit his cause to God; his faith increases more and more, and he grows stronger every day.

The heart which is furnished with these spiritual gifts thinks little of its own private advantages; but overflows with good-will towards his brother, and for his sake forbears to do many things, which otherwise he might be allowed to do. 'All things,' says St. Paul, 'are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient;' for all have not made equal advances in faith.

To be plain; we ought to bear with the infirmities of our brethren, and to feed them with milk; and not to be so selfish as to think of arriving at heaven ALONE, but rather to try whether we cannot gain our brethren by kindness, and make them our companions in the road to the mansions of the blessed, though, for the present, they may be inimical to us.—For example, if I had been with you lately, when ye were abolishing the masses, I should have endeavoured to moderate your heat and impetuosity. Your cause was good, but was managed by you with too much violence. There are, I trust, among the opposite party, many brothers and sisters who belong to us, and must be drawn to us with the cords of love. Let your faith be firm as a rock; but let your charity be pliable, and accommodated to the circumstances of your neighbour. Some can only

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creep, others can walk briskly, and others again are so swift that they can almost fly.

The error of those, who abolished the masses, consisted, not in doing a thing that was wrong in itself, but in not doing what they did in a right manner. Their proceedings were most rash and precipitate, and inconsistent with all the laws of order; and no wonder, therefore, that they gave great offence to their neighbours. Such a business should not have been undertaken without serious prayers to God in the first place: and in the next place the assent of the magistrates should have been obtained: and thus it would have been manifest that these new regulations were ordained of God. Long ago I might have taken the same step, if I had thought it either lawful or prudent. But the truth is, I so entirely disapprove the spirit with which you have acted, that if the mass were not in itself an abomination, I should be disposed to re-establish it. I could indeed plead your cause before the pope, but I cannot acquit you of having fallen into the snares of Satan. I wish you had asked my advice, which you might easily have done; I was at no such great distance."

In a subsequent discourse, in prosecution of the same subject, he spake thus: "That the private masses ought to be abolished is as clear as that God is to be worshipped; and with my voice and my pen I would strenuously maintain that they are a most horrid abomination. Yet I would not pull away by force any one person from the mass. Let us preach the Gospel; and commit the event to the Divine will. Let us say, 'Beloved countrymen, abstain, I beseech you, in future, from the mass. Indeed, it is a blasphemous practice, and most highly offensive to Almighty God.' But by no means would I compel them, especially by the hasty and intemperate decision of a mob, to comply with our forms of sacramental communion. No; I would instruct, I

would admonish them from the sacred pages, and if they took my advice I should have happily gained them over to the truth; but if not, it does not become me to drag them away by the hair of the head, or to use violence of any other kind; but rather to leave the word of God to its own operation, and to pray for them. By acting in this manner, the force of Scripture will penetrate the hearts of men, and produce an effectual and a durable change of sentiment. Proselytes will be made gradually; and when men are become, in general, of the same mind, then they will agree in laying aside their erroneous forms and ceremonies. In all this I am far from wishing to restore the use of the mass. If it be abrogated, let it remain so. All I affirm is, what you must be convinced of, namely, that faith, in its very nature, is incapable of restraint or coercion. CENT. XVI.

As an example, reflect on my conduct in the affair of the indulgences. I had the whole body of the papists to oppose. I preached, I wrote, I pressed on men's consciences with the greatest earnestness the positive declarations of the Word of God, but I used not a particle of force or constraint. What has been the consequence? This same Word of God has, while I was asleep in my bed, given such a blow to papal despotism, as not one of the German princes, not even the emperor himself could have done. It is not I, I repeat it, it is the Divine Word which has done every thing. Had it been right to have aimed at a reform by violence and tumults, it would have been easy for me to have deluged Germany with blood; nay, had I been in the least inclined to promote sedition, it was in my power, when I was at Worms, to have endangered the safety even of the emperor himself. The devil smiles in secret when men pretend to support religion by seditious tumults; but he is cut to the heart, when he sees them, in faith and patience, rely on the written word."

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These extracts from Luther's sermons may suffice as specimens of the wisdom and discretion with which that Reformer addressed and directed his congregation in a critical extremity, when the best friends of the protestant cause were almost in despair. They may also have other important uses, especially when taken in connexion with the other parts of this circumstantial account of Luther's motives for leaving the castle of Wartburg. For example; they demonstrate, in general, the enlightened state of the mind of the great German Reformer at this very early period of the reformation; and they furnish the completest answer to the invidious conjecture of those, who have imagined that the "true reason of his displeasure at the proceedings of Carolstadt was, that he could not bear to see another crowned with the glory of executing a PLAN which he had laid *."

* The facts prove that Luther laid down no plan at all. His eyes opened by degrees, and he was faithful to the light afforded him. He acted to the best of his judgment always at the moment, and committed his cause to God, completely ignorant of what he might be called to do or to suffer; but as completely disposed to obey what should appear to him to be the Divine will. The learned translator of Mosheim, in his note, quoted above in the text, supposes that Luther was ambitious of appearing as the principal Reformer. There is no doubt but he was in FACT the PRINCIPAL. Neither the caution of Frederic, nor the erudition of Melancthon, could have done much without the judgment, the vigour, and the activity of Luther. Be it granted then, that this Reformer was ambitious of appearing WHAT HE REALLY WAS; what is this but saying that he was but a man? St. Paul himself did not like to build upon another man's foundation. As to the glory of executing a plan by riot and tumult, nothing could be more contrary to Luther's principles than the use of force and violence, or than the breach of peace and decorum. See his Life by Melancthon, page 55. Append. to Vol. iv. See also Luther's Warning against Sedition and Tumult. In this last tract he exhorts all men, not so much as to mention his name in a sectarian view; not to call themselves Lutherans, but Christians. "The doctrine," says he, "is not mine, nor was I crucified for any one. Paul and Peter forbad the people to call themselves after their names; why should I, who am soon to be food for worms,

The people of Wittemberg heard their beloved pastor with the greatest satisfaction: and again tranquillity and concord began to flourish in the church. The importance of Carolstadt vanished before the influence of Luther; and, after various travels and schemes, he became fixed at Basil, where he exercised the pastoral office for ten years, and died in 1531*. CENT. XVI. Death of Carolstadt, 1531.

Luther, in a letter to the Prior of Eisleben, gives the following concise account of the misunderstanding between Carolstadt and himself:

"I offended Carolstadt," says he, "because I annulled his institutions; though I by no means condemned his doctrine. In one point, however, he grieved me much. I found him taking prodigious pains about ceremonies and things external, and, at the same time, very negligent in inculcating the essential principles of Christianity; namely, faith and charity. By his injudicious method of teaching, he had induced many of the people to think themselves Christians, however deficient in these graces, provided they did but communicate in both kinds, take the consecrated elements into their own hands, refuse private confession, and break images. Observe how the malice of Satan attempts to ruin the Gospel in a new way. All along, my object has been, by instruction, to emancipate the consciences of men from the bondage of human

desire the children of Christ to be called by the name of so poor a creature? By no means! No! No! Let us have done with factious appellations; and be called Christians, because we possess the doctrine of Christianity. The papists have very properly another name, because they are not content with Christ's name, and Christ's doctrine; they choose to be called papists. Be it so; because they have a master. I desire to be no man's master. I hold, with the church, the doctrine which belongs to us all in common, and of which Christ alone is the author." Seck. Ind. III. Suppl.

* As Carolstadt at length joined the Zuinglian communion, any further account of him will more properly fall in with the history of that church, than with the history of Lutheranism.

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inventions of every kind; and then the papal fooleries would soon fall of themselves by common consent. But Carolstadt suddenly set himself up as a new teacher, and by his own arbitrary institutions endeavoured to ruin my credit with the people."

Treatment of the Prophets.

There now only remained, as an object of contention, the turbulence and fanaticism of the prophets, mentioned some pages before*. The associates of Stubner pressed him to defend his pretensions openly, and to confront the Reformer, who, by his sermons and his authority, had nearly restored peace and unanimity among the people. With much reluctance, Luther consented to hold a conference, in the presence of Melancthon, with this enthusiast and Cellary, and another of the same fanatical sect. Our sagacious Reformer patiently heard the prophet relate his visions; and when the harangue was finished, recollecting that nonsense was incapable of confutation, he briefly admonished him to take care what he did. You have mentioned, said he, nothing that has the least support in Scripture; the whole seems rather an ebullition of imagination, or, perhaps, the fraudulent suggestion of an evil spirit. Cellary, in a storm of indignation, stamped on the ground, struck the table with his hands, and expressed the most lively resentment that Luther should dare to say such things of so divine a personage. Stubner, with more calmness, told Luther he would give him a proof that he was influenced by the Divine Spirit: for, said he, I will reveal your own thoughts at this moment. You are inclined to believe my doctrine true, notwithstanding what has passed. The man, however, was totally mistaken in his conjecture;—for Luther afterwards declared that he was then meditating on the divine sentence, "The Lord rebuke thee, Satan." The prophets now boasted and threatened, in the

* Page 44.

most pompous, and extravagant terms, what surprising things they would do to establish their commission; but Luther thought proper to put an end to the conversation by dismissing them with these words, "The God whom I serve and adore will confound your vanities." That very day they left the town, and sent letters to Luther full of execrations and abuse. The leaders, however, being gone, their disciples dwindled in number; and for the present the delusion was quashed*. CENT. XVI.

It was not, however, in the power of Luther, to infuse into all his followers the moderate and cautious spirit with which he himself, notwithstanding the warmth of his temper, was constantly possessed. He expresses his grief, that many monks, deserting their monasteries, flocked to Wittemberg, and married immediately, actuated by no better motives than those of mere sensuality; from which he foresaw the scandal which would arise against the Gospel. He complains, that wickedness still abounded among those who professed to abhor the papacy, and that they had the kingdom of God among them too much in WORD, instead of power†. There were, however, some of those that deserted the monasteries, who gave the most shining proofs of genuine godliness, and who were the most active instruments of the propagation of the Gospel. Nor were their labours, or those of Luther, in vain: many souls were turned from the power of Satan to God. It required only the exercise of common candour and equity to acknowledge the utility of the reformation in these and other important instances, and not to expect from the labours of a few upright pastors the

* These fanatical prophets opposed the baptism of infants; and appear to have been among the very first of the turbulent German anabaptists;—a sect, which ought never to be confounded with the baptists of our times. Melch. Adam.

† Comment. de Luth. cxxiii.

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entire renovation of the human species. Luther's zeal was no less vehement against the ABUSE of Christian liberty, than it was against papal bondage; he was cautious and slow in the promotion of external changes in the church, ardent and intent on the advancement of internal religion; he lamented the perverseness of hypocritical professors; he checked the ferocious spirits of the forward and the turbulent; and demonstrated his own sincerity by a perfect contempt of all secular arts to obtain applause and popularity. It was not to be supposed, that all men who had been habituated to folly and wickedness under the popedom, should immediately, on hearing his sermons, commence real saints; it is rather to be admired as a great effect of divine grace, that so many gave substantial proofs of genuine conversion.

His personal circumstances were all this time truly distressing. He thus describes them in a letter to Gerbelius of Strasburg*. "I am now encompassed with no guards, but those of heaven; I live in the midst of enemies, who have a legal power of killing me every hour. This is the way in which I comfort myself; I know that Christ is Lord of all, that the Father hath put all things under his feet, among the rest the wrath of the emperor, and all evil spirits. If it please Christ that I should be slain, let me die in his name; if it do not please him, who shall slay me? Do you only, with your friends, take care to assist the cause of the Gospel by your prayers.—For, through our grievous ingratitude, we hold the Gospel in word only, and not in power, and are more elated in knowledge than edified in charity, I fear our Germany will be drenched in blood." To Langus the pastor of Erfurt he wrote thus: "I must not come to you; it behoveth me not to tempt God, by seeking dangers

* Epist. Lib. 2.

elsewhere, when I am full of them here already, excluded as I am by the papal and imperial anathemas, exposed to be murdered by any one, absolutely with no protection except that which is from above." CENT. XVI.

Amidst all these difficulties, however, he remitted not his usual vigour and activity. During his confinement he had studied the Hebrew tongue with persevering industry, and had translated the whole New Testament into the German language. And in the course of this year, 1522, he published the version. He then proceeded to apply his Hebrew studies to the translation of the Old Testament, which he also published gradually, and finished the whole in the year 1530. In this work he was much assisted by the labour and advice of several of his friends, particularly Justus Jonas and Philip Melancthon. The whole performance itself was a monument of that astonishing industry which marked the character of this Reformer. The effects of this labour were soon felt in Germany; immense numbers now read in their own language the precious word of God, and saw with their own eyes the just foundations of the Lutheran doctrine. To decide on the merits of Luther's translation, would require not only an exact knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek, but also of the German language; certainly it was elegant and perspicuous, and, beyond comparison, preferable to any scriptural publication which had before been known to the populace. It is probable that this work had many defects; but, that it was in the main faithful and sound, may be fairly presumed from the solid understanding, biblical learning, and multifarious knowledge of the author and his coadjutors. A more acceptable present could scarcely have been conferred on men, who were emerging out of darkness; and the example being followed soon after by reformers in other nations, the real knowledge of Scripture, if we take

Luther publishes the New Testament in German, A. D. 1522.

Also the Old Testament, A. D. 1530.

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into the account the effects of the art of printing; was facilitated to a surprising degree.

The papacy saw all this, and sighed indignant.

Emser, a doctor of Leipsic, endeavoured to depreciate the credit of Luther's version; and the popish princes, within the bounds of their respective dominions, ordered the work to be burnt. Nor was their resentment appeased by the advices which Luther openly gave to their subjects, which was this,—patiently to bear their sufferings without resisting their governors, but not to come forward voluntarily and deliver up their German bibles, nor to do any act, which might testify an approbation of the requisitions of their superiors on the occasion.

The duke George is enraged at the growth of Lutheranism.

In the mean time, George of Saxony, incensed at the growth of Lutheranism, and expostulating repeatedly with his nephew the elector, on account of his conduct, began to encourage the papal bishops to exert themselves in their respective dioceses. Among these, John à Schleinig, bishop of Misnia, commenced an episcopal visitation in this year. The Elector refused not his consent; too timid to withstand openly the power of the popedom, and too conscientious to undertake the decision of theological cases, to which he confessed his knowledge to be inadequate. A long course of superstitious servility from his early years had enfeebled, in religious matters, the intellectual powers of this prince, which, in secular affairs, were justly looked on as exceedingly eminent. His labours and expense in the collection of relics had been astonishing; yet, amidst all his superstitions, doubts, and embarrassments, he had constantly preserved a secret predilection for something of evangelical truth; and, on no occasion would permit it to be oppressed by violence, though through life he never openly supported it*. Thus, in the course of divine

* There is on record a notable instance of the resolute deter-

Providence, the foundations of the Reformation were laid in Germany by the preaching and exposition of the word of God, with no more aid from the civil power than that of a connivance, firm indeed and unalterable, but ever bearing the marks of hesitation and indecision. That Frederic should permit the bishop of Misnia, an avowed and professional adversary of Luther to visit the churches, might alarm the minds of many; but it produced no mischievous effects. He preached, he warned, he expostulated, through the diocese; but the papal arguments were now stale, insipid, and ineffective. So much light had been diffused through Saxony, that this prelate's defence of masses, of communion in one kind, of the pope's authority and infallibility, and of the rest of the Romish tenets, appeared ridiculous to the laity. Other bishops, with the consent of the Elector, made the same peregrinations with the same effect; and it required all the power and rigour of the duke George to keep his own subjects within the bounds of papal obedience. So much more happy

mination of this good prince to protect his subjects from papal cruelty. A clergyman of Schmeiedberg, in the electorate of Frederic, complained to the elector, that attempts had been made to carry him away by force to Stolpen, the place of the residence of the bishop of Misnia. This bishop also, about the same time, having before accused the said clergyman of not appearing to a citation which he had sent to him, had entreated the prince to compel his subject to obedience. Frederick replied, that the grounds of the citation ought to have been stated; and that he would not permit his clergy to be taken by force, and carried out of his dominions, without his knowledge and approbation. The fault of this clergyman appears to have been, that he laboured under the suspicion of being married. Some other cases of a like sort happened during this year. The bishop remonstrated; but Frederic continued steady; and would allow no force to be employed against his clergy. Further, he desired the bishop to appeal to him no more against them on the account of their being married. He might use, he said, his ecclesiastical jurisdiction against them, if he pleased. The elector had learnt, that this tyrannical bishop had shut up in a noisome prison, three clergymen belonging to the district of duke George; and had actually put another to death. Seck.

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did the subjects of Frederic, who enjoyed liberty of conscience, seem to be than themselves, who remained papists by constraint; and so much light, from the proximity of their situation, had they received concerning the nature of true religion*.

But the difficulties of providing for the instruction and edification of the Lutheran churches began now to be more and more apparent. It was not possible, that public worship and the administration of the sacraments could be conducted decently and in order without some plan of ecclesiastical discipline. The court would do no more than grant a tacit protection to the pastors; and the great personal authority of Luther seemed to be the only cement of union among those who loved the Gospel. It was easy to foresee what feuds and divisions might arise from so uncertain and fluctuating a state of the church; and there was no opportunity of forming a general synod of pastors and elders, who might regulate the external state of religion. On the one hand, the bishops, and many of the clergy and monks, who still adhered to the old system, laboured to harass and perplex the minds of all serious inquirers after Divine truth; and on the other, many of the people panted for the benefit of a church order, more emancipated from superstitions, and better adapted to the evangelical ideas which they were continually receiving, either from reading the books or hearing the sermons of Luther and his associates. In this crisis the Reformer was consulted by the parochial clergy of some of the principal towns in Saxony, who approved of the alterations which he had introduced into Wittemberg with the consent of the inhabitants and the connivance of the elector, and who, therefore, were anxious to inquire and try whether improvements of a similar kind might not be made in other places. This application gave rise to a little treatise, which Luther in the year 1523, published and dedicated to

* Archiv. Vin.

Nicolas Hausman, the pastor of Zwickau, whom the author revered very highly, as has been already observed. The exordium of this tract may deserve to be quoted, as it will sufficiently explain the principles of the external reformation which was gradually introduced into various parts of Germany, where Lutheranism prevailed, and illustrate the customs of the churches while they were yet in an imperfect state of discipline. "Hitherto," said he, "by books and by preaching I have laboured among the people, to inform their minds, and to draw their hearts from false dependencies; thinking it a Christian employment, if possible, to BREAK WITHOUT HANDS* the abomination which Satan, by the man of sin, had set up in the holy place. I have attempted nothing forcibly, nothing imperiously; nor have I changed old customs; being always afraid of doing mischief, partly on account of those who are weak in the faith, and cannot suddenly be divested of old prejudices or induced to acquiesce in new modes of worship, but principally because of those light and fastidious spirits, who rush on without faith and without understanding, and delight in novelty only, and are presently disgusted, when the charms of novelty have ceased. In other subjects, persons of this turn of mind are sufficiently troublesome; in religion, however, they are peculiarly so: still it is my duty to bear them, though my temper must thereby be tried to the utmost;—unless, indeed, I were to cease all my attempts to spread the Gospel among the public. But, as I now flatter myself that the hearts of many are both enlightened and strengthened by the grace of God, and as the circumstances require that scandals should at length be removed out of the kingdom of Christ, we ought to attempt something in HIS NAME. For it is highly proper, that we should consult for the good of the few, lest while we perpetually dread the levity and abuses of the many, we should do good

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* Dan. viii. 25.

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to none; and lest, while we dread future scandals, we should confirm the general abominations. We will therefore endeavour in the sacramental forms, so to regulate the use of them, that we may not only instruct the hearts of the people, but also recommend a public administration of them, without pretending to impose our own ideas upon others. And we entreat the brethren heartily, through Jesus Christ, that if any thing better be revealed to them, they would exhibit it, that the public benefit may be conducted by public counsel."—The whole passage seems to be a memorable evidence of that thoughtfulness and caution, which marked the conduct of this early Reformer in all his public proceedings. On this plan he undertook to remove some of the most flagrant abuses in baptism and the Lord's supper, and to recommend communion in both kinds, at the same time that he still tolerated, till a more favourable opportunity occurred, many lesser matters not directly sinful, though inconvenient and useless: for the zeal of Luther, like that of St. Paul, exerted all its vehemence on the essentials of salvation,—real faith, and real piety. In externals and ceremonious subjects, he would, to many protestants, appear too remiss, especially to those who have not considered so much, as he did, the danger of needless divisions.

He complained, however, of an evil in the great church at Wittemberg, which it was not in his power to rectify, namely, the celebration of private masses, in which the very essence of religious merchandise and religious imposture consisted *. It is not easy to exculpate the elector of Saxony on this article, as he must have well known the danger and mischief of the traffic; but he appears either not to have had the fortitude to oppose the abomination, or, what is more probable, to have had some method of pacifying his

* By means of these masses, those who had money supposed that they could secure to themselves the favour of God, in their journeys, voyages, and such like, and even after death. Luth. Op. II. 348.

conscience in tolerating the nuisance*. Not long after, it pleased God to remove by death some of the more obstinate canons of Wittemberg, and Luther found an opportunity of gradually annihilating this great bulwark of popery. Neither did it escape the sagacity of our Reformer, that the alterations which were daily taking place, in consequence of the protestant doctrines, would in many instances be attended with a dangerous redundance of ecclesiastical revenue. The monasteries and colleges would soon be deserted, and it was not probable that new inhabitants would succeed the old ones. Luther foresaw, that much scandal and great abuses might arise from this circumstance, unless certain effectual precautions were taken in due time, to prevent the superfluous money from becoming a temptation to the rapacity or covetousness of worldly-minded men. He therefore published his thoughts freely on this delicate subject respecting the proper application of ecclesiastical property; and thereby, as might be expected, gave prodigious offence to the papal party. The little tract is in the German language, and has been called the COMMON TREASURY, because he proposed that a sort of common treasury should be made of the above-mentioned ecclesiastical revenues, and be applied to the erection of schools and hospitals, the maintenance of preachers, and other pious and laudable objects. Luther, for merely giving this advice, was accused of setting up himself, by his own private authority, as the supreme lawgiver, and also of attempting to gratify the German princes with the plunder of the church†. But there is not the least foundation for either of these charges.

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During these unceasing efforts of the Reformer to promote the glory of God in the recovery and establishment of Christian liberty, his grand adversary, George duke of Saxony, had strained every nerve in

* Seck. 217—223. 274—276. † Du Pin. Maimbourg, 55.

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opposition to the good cause, and, by continual exertions in support of the declining credit of the papal system, manifested his bigoted attachment to that corrupt communion. This faithful son of the Romish church, having in vain endeavoured, by repeated remonstrances, to persuade the elector to use his authority in repressing the new religion, resolved to try whether he might not have better success with John duke of Saxony, the brother of Frederic. In a letter written with his own hand, he complained heavily to this prince of the heretical transactions at Wittemberg and Zwickau, and of the remissness of his brother the elector. The faithful clergy were insulted, and even pelted with stones, while those of the Lutheran sect married wives, and wrote books in defence of the marriages of the monks. There were even some who were destitute of all religion, and denied the immortality of the soul. All these evils he said, proceeded from the novel doctrines of the arch-heretic; and gave him the more pain, since he had found the contagion was spreading among his own subjects. He concluded with beseeching his nephew John to do his utmost to convince the elector Frederic, how absolutely necessary it was become that he should clear himself of the suspicion of heresy, either by punishing the innovators, or at least openly expressing his disapprobation of their proceedings. He would gladly concur, he said, with his two nephews in suppressing the growing mischief, and had more to say on this subject. To this exhortation, John duke of Saxony, who will shortly appear to have been a stanch protestant, and who well knew how fruitless would be any attempt to argue with his prejudiced uncle, returned no more than a concise and civil reply,—that he would not fail to communicate with his brother the elector, and would be ready to pay due attention to any further advice the duke George might think proper to give.

But George, the most determined bigot of the age,

was not satisfied with using persuasions only. He had recourse to what he supposed more efficacious methods of securing the unity of the church. Under the authority of the emperor, and in concert with Alexander and other enemies of the reformation, he had procured the severe edict of Nuremberg*, and was labouring in every way he could devise to render it effective. It was in obedience to the special directions of this edict that the bishops began their penal, and coercive visitations; and it was under the sanction of the same tyrannical measure, that George, by imprisonments and other cruelties, supported, through every part of his own territory, the ecclesiastical inquisitions. Moreover, this active zealot, to render his plans of persecution more extensive, tried once more, by a literary correspondence, to obtain the co-operation of the elector of Saxony. He said, the reputation of that wise prince was suffering from a want of vigorous animadversion on the apostate clergy: he had heard, during his stay at Nuremberg, many reports of the profane doctrines and irregular practices of the schismatics under Frederic's jurisdiction: and to be brief, he neither undertood nor wished to understand, all the obscure hints which were thrown out to the disadvantage of his nephew.

Upon the elector's demanding an explanation of this inuendo, he owned, that he had not heard of any specific charge being made against the person of Frederic, but that nevertheless numbers of people expressed their astonishment, that so good a prince should tolerate the heresy and disobedience even of his own professors and teachers. A doctor and ex-monk at Eislenberg, named Gabriel†, was said to be a principal instigator of all this mischief. Moreover, they accused Carolstadt of being married, and Melancthon of doing such things as the very Hussites would have held in abhorrence. The duke George

* Seck. 190. See also the note in p. 51 of this Vol.

† See Appendix, Gabriel.

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protested that the hearing of these things gave him the greatest concern; and he heartily wished that those, who boasted of having caused so much evangelical light in the electorate of Frederic, had been preaching their Gospel at Constantinople; for he was sure they had brought upon their prince, now in his old age, abundance of ignominious reflections. He concluded with earnestly exhorting the elector to punish most severely the refractory monks and priests, and thereby give proof of his piety and regard to duty.

The elector replied concisely, but with great prudence and moderation. He had hoped, he said, that the duke his uncle on such an occasion would have behaved like a friend and a Christian; that he would not have given credit to slanderous reports, but have defended him from the charge of countenancing irreligion and impiety. Reports of that sort were to be despised, and their punishment left to the Almighty. He himself should never approve any thing that was contrary to the honour of God, the sound judgment of the holy fathers, and the salvation of mankind: and as to those who were guilty in these respects, it was at their own peril, they must take the consequences; and should they prove to be his own subjects, he would assuredly punish them, when convicted of having done any thing illegal.

He confessed, it was true that Luther had returned to Wittemberg, but then it was without the prince's leave; and it was also well known that the prince had never undertaken to defend his doctrine. He said, he had many other observations to make in reply, but he was afraid of being troublesome to the duke;—he therefore concluded with entreating him never to suppose it possible that he could be disinclined to give the utmost attention to every proposal which tended to promote the glory of God and Christian charity.

Thus this wise prince, by avoiding a fruitless

contention on the points in dispute, and by returning a discreet answer, which consisted chiefly in general declarations, adhered with consistency and dignity to his own cautious maxims, and effectually frustrated the inhuman designs of a sincere, but barbarous persecutor.

The reader will, however, understand, that it was only so far as the jurisdiction of the elector of Saxony extended that the designs of George were frustrated. The mild and decorous language of Frederic seems indeed to have abated somewhat of the fury of the duke in the course of their epistolary conflict, but to have produced no durable or substantial change on his mind in favour of reason, humanity, and Christian liberty. He continued to persecute with unrelenting cruelty those clergy of his own district who were in the least disposed to Lutheranism, and likewise all persons who ventured to communicate at the Lord's supper in both kinds: he recalled from the schools and universities, wherever he supposed the contagion of the new doctrines prevailed, all the students who were under his power or influence; and he purchased, with a view to destroy Luther's version of the New Testament, as many copies of it as he could collect, and severely punished such of his subjects as refused to deliver them up. Emboldened by these rigorous proceedings of the duke, his bigoted ecclesiastics raged against the Lutherans with increased violence and rancour. The pulpits in Leipsic resounded with vindictive declamation; and the bishops in their visitations denounced the most cruel punishments against all who should dare either to read Luther's translation, or to go into the neighbouring district of the elector of Saxony for the purpose of hearing the sermons of the reformers. The blind persecutors were not then aware how completely they were defeating their own designs by these cruelties. The seminaries of education at Leipsic were more and more deserted: the young

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scholars, impelled by curiosity, a thirst of knowledge, or a hatred of compulsion, fled to Wittemberg, now become famous for rational inquiry and Christian liberty.

The papal historian Maimbourg confesses, that Luther's translations of the Old and New Testament were remarkably elegant, and in general so much approved, that they were read by almost every body throughout Germany. Women of the first distinction studied them with the most industrious and persevering attention, and obstinately defended the tenets of the Reformer against bishops, monks, and catholic doctors*.—Hence the necessity of some speedy ANTIDOTES, which might resist the ravages of such contagious publications.

Emser attacks Luther's translations of the Scriptures.

Jerom Emser†, a Leipsic doctor, and a counsellor of the duke George, was fixed upon as best qualified to furnish THESE. This champion of the papacy first published his puerile, but calumnious Notes on Luther's New Testament; and afterwards, through the encouragement of George and two bishops, produced what was called, A correct Translation of the New Testament into German, but which, in fact, was little more than a transcript of Luther's labours, some alterations in favour of the peculiar tenets of the Romish church excepted. The performances of Emser, as far as they were his own, were deemed contemptible in the highest degree, on account of the malignant cavilling disposition of their author, and also of his extreme ignorance of the German language. It would be lost time to detain the reader with instances either of his wretched verbal criticisms, or of his hackneyed unwarrantable objections to the Reformer's doctrine of faith and works. There are, however, two circumstances relative to this business, which may deserve to be briefly mentioned, as they tend to characterize most distinctly the spirit of those adversaries with

* Maimb. Sect. 51. † See Appendix.—Emser.

whom a reformer had to conted in the time of Luther. CENT. XVI.

1. Such were the prejudices and the blindness of George of Saxony, that as soon as Emser's version of the New Testament was ready for publication, he issued a proclamation, in which he treated Luther and his disciples with the most virulent and contumelious language: he not only reprobated his opinions in general, but also reproached him for being the real author of all the excesses, seditions, and mutinies, which had lately happened among the people; and in particular, laid great stress on the mischief which he had done to Christianity by his version of the New Testament: in prohibiting the use of which, he said, "he acted in obedience to the late edict of Nuremberg, agreeably to what was the acknowledged duty of every German prince."

2. The other circumstance respects the avowed declarations of Emser,—"That he had confuted Luther's interpretations of the Scriptures, and opposed to them his own, constantly following that sense of any passage which the church approved. That, however, he was by no means convinced of the expediency of trusting the Scriptures with the ignorant multitude: The sacred writings were an abyss in whose depths even the most learned men had often been lost." "If the laity," said he, "would but take my advice, I would recommend it to them rather to aim at a holy life, than to study the Scriptures. The Scriptures are committed to the learned, and to them only."

This needs no comment.

Amidst the rough treatment which Luther met with from Emser and his patrons, he derived, like St. Paul, abundant consolation from reflecting how much the knowledge of the Bible was spreading among the people, whatever the cause might be, and even though a spirit of envy and strife and opposition was the undoubted motive of his enemies.—

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"I would have been glad," says he, "to have seen any one of the popish adherents dare to come forward and translate, without the help of Luther's version, a single epistle of St. Paul, or one of the prophets. They would have made fine work of it, as may be seen from the few places where the Dresden impostor* has altered my Testament. In fact he has left out my preface, inserted his own, and then sold my translation almost word for word. If any person suspect my veracity, let them compare my book with the production of this plagiary, and they will soon be convinced who was the real translator. It was sufficiently vexatious to see the duke of Saxony proscribe my version, and direct Emser's to be read, when they are really one and the same. The above-mentioned patchwork of this writer, where he undertakes to mend my translation, is not worthy of notice, and therefore I have determined not to produce a syllable in print against what he calls his version. In the mean time I cannot but look with a smile of admiration on those very WISE ONES, who calumniate and condemn my Testament, merely because it comes before the public under the name of Luther; but I pretend not to estimate the merits of those who steal the writings of others, affix their own names to them, and in this fraudulent way extend their reputation among the people. There is a just Judge who will see to this. The best revenge which I can wish for is, that though Luther's name is suppressed, and that of his adversary put in its place, yet Luther's book is read, and thus the design of his labours is promoted by his very enemies†."

Though the bitterness, activity, and perseverance of George of Saxony, has secured to him an infamous precedence among the persecutors of those times, yet there were not wanting instances of the

* Emser. † Altenb. v.

exercise of similar zeal and barbarity in support of the popedom. Henry duke of Brunswic is numbered among the princes who followed his example; and also the emperor's brother, Ferdinand archduke of Austria. This latter issued a severe edict to prevent the publication of Luther's translation of the Bible, which had soon gone through several editions; and he forbad all the subjects of his Imperial majesty to have any copies either of that or of any of Luther's books. In Flanders the persecution appears to have been extreme. Many, on account of their adherence to Lutheranism, were put to death, or deprived of their property, by the most summary and tyrannical proceedings. At Antwerp the monks were remarkably favourable to the reformation. Many of them suffered death with patience and firmness; others were punished in various ways, after having, through long imprisonment and the dread of losing their lives, been compelled to recant. CENT. XVI.

In nothing but their ZEAL did Luther imitate either the civil or the ecclesiastical persecutors of the protestants. He was now at open war with the pope, his cardinals and his bishops; but, on his part, it was entirely a war of reason and argument. From all his numerous or most acrimonious publications, not a single line has been produced where he wishes or recommends force or violence, in the smallest degree, to be used against the persons of his enemies. However, in proportion as the tempest thickened and grew daily more dangerous, our Reformer stood in need of fresh supplies of courage and activity. His opponents were powerful, and meditated the extirpation both of the teacher and his disciples. Their ears were deaf to the expostulations of reason, and their hearts hardened against the cries of humanity. Wherever the barbarous inquisitors had the civil power on their side, nothing but the apprehension of being condemned at the awful tribunal of the PUBLIC OPINION could

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suspend the uplifted hand of persecution. On this apprehension was grounded the invariable maxim of the Romish policy, namely, to keep the Scriptures from the people, to darken their understanding, and to implant in their minds an implicit confidence in the corrupt dogmas of their ecclesiastical constitution.

It was therefore the wisdom and the duty of Martin Luther to adopt a directly opposite system of conduct; and few men have been more admirably qualified to inculcate important truths on the minds of the people. Distinct in his conceptions, eloquent in expressing them, and fearless of danger, he confounded his adversaries, instructed the ignorant, and every day brought proselytes to the simplicity of the Gospel. He conversed, he preached, he wrote, with almost unexampled industry. He placed the controverted points in various lights, and often overwhelmed his adversaries with the rapidity of his productions.

This determined opposition to the hierarchy provoked the indignation of the papal adherents, and was, no doubt, the immediate cause of many cruel and sanguinary proceedings, both of the civil and the ecclesiastical powers. Nothing could be more natural than that Antichrist should become more furious and unrelenting, as its empire diminished and seemed hastening to destruction. The considerations of the sufferings of the godly deeply afflicted the mind of Luther; but there was no other vengeance which he dared to inflict beyond that of exposing the unreasonableness, the ignorance, the absurdities, and the blasphemies of his enemies. He might easily have excited the leading characters among his countrymen to hostility and rebellion, and still more easily the common people to sedition and mutiny; but such conduct would have been directly inconsistent with every part of his practice, as well as every article of his creed. In obedience to the

sacred injunctions, he preached submission to authority, and himself constantly exemplified his doctrine; he assailed men's understandings ONLY; and while the infatuated papists, by multiplied and augmented severities, endeavoured to check the operation of his labours, he manfully persevered in the same course of legal and rational opposition: and though it was impossible that he should not thereby have rendered the spirit of bigotry and superstition still more malignant and outrageous, it was nevertheless his uninterrupted consolation to reflect, that his cause was the cause of God and his Christ; that he had wielded no weapon in the conflict but that of the Divine Word; and that while his own life, and the lives of his associates, were every moment in the most imminent peril through the barbarous zeal of his persecutors, he was in the mean time undermining the very principles of persecution itself, and paving the way for their total extinction.

This bold Reformer was never content to remain purely on the defensive. Besides his numerous exhortations and expositions of different parts of the Scriptures, we find him constantly making attacks on the essential doctrines and usages of the Romish communion. In the course of the present year, besides his translation of the Bible, he published several tracts in the German language; the most elaborate of which is intitled, Martin Luther, against the order, falsely called, the ecclesiastical order of pope and bishops.—In this work he styles himself simply the PREACHER. He was stripped, he said, by the pope's bulls, of the titles of priest and doctor, which however he willingly resigned, having no desire to retain any mark of distinction that was conferred by papal authority.

Several tracts published by Luther. A. D. 1522.

"Ye bishops," said he, "revile me as a heretic, but I regard you not. I can prove that I have a much greater claim to the title of Preacher, than ye can that ye answer the scriptural description of

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bishops. Nor have I any doubt, but that Christ, in the great day of account, will testify to the truth of my doctrine, which indeed is not mine, but that of God and the Spirit of the Lord. Your outrageous violence can profit you nothing: the more ye give way to this insanity, the more steady and determined, through God's help, shall be my opposition. Nay, though ye should kill me, Ye men of blood, ye will not destroy this doctrine as long as Christ lives. Moreover, I foresee there will be an end of your tyranny and your murders."

"Further, since ye are open enemies of the truth, I tell you plainly, that for the future I will not deign to submit my doctrine either to your judgment or to that of an angel from heaven. Surely I have already shown sufficient humility in offering myself three times for examination at the last Diet of Worms:—and all to no purpose. I shall now go on and discharge my duty as a preacher. It is at men's peril if they reject my doctrine, for it is of God; I repeat it, it is of God."

"In one word, Sirs, this is my resolution. As long as I live, my attacks on your abominations shall grow bolder and fiercer. I will make no truce with you. And if ye slay me, ye shall still be farther from peace. As the prophet Hosea says, I will be unto you, 'as a lion, as a leopard by the way.' My most earnest wish is, that ye should repent; but if ye will not repent, there must be perpetual war between us. I shall put my trust in God, and not care one straw for your hatred; and ye will be in danger every moment of falling under the heavy judgment of the Divine displeasure."

The author then proceeds to show how much those were to be valued who were bishops indeed, and governed their flocks according to the rules prescribed by St. Paul to Timothy and Titus; and how exceedingly opposite to the apostolical standard was the general character of the bishops of his own

time. They were ignorant, debauched, and tyrannical; enemies to the Gospel and the truth; idolaters, who followed the traditions of men, and worshipped the pope. The monasteries and collegiate churches were become, in a great measure, theatres of useless ceremonies. "I wish," says he, "that where there are now a hundred monasteries, there was but one; and that of a hundred collegiate churches, there were left but one or two, and that these were used as seminaries of education for Christian youth. For however holy these institutions may seem to be in their external appearance, they abound with hypocritical and Satanic corruptions: nor is it possible to prevent them from being the road to Hell, unless the pure Gospel should be constantly preached and taught as the governing principle, forming and establishing the Christian character, through the exercises of temptation and the cross, with a lively faith and hope." CENT. XVI.

The author likewise reprobates, in the most glowing terms, the pride, luxury, avarice, and licentiousness of the dignified ecclesiastics. Their boasted chastity and continence was all pretence, and was the source of infinite mischief to young persons. The bishops would not marry, but were allowed to have as many harlots as they pleased. They went about with prodigious pomp and a numerous retinue; and ruined the souls of the poor, often driven to despair by their tyrannical excommunications, while their greedy officials, like Verres of old, tortured their bodies after they had plundered them of their property.

"But," says he, "the most atrocious and most mischievous poison of all the papal usages is that, where the pontiff, in his bulls of indulgence, grants a full remission of sins. Christ, in the 9th of Matthew, did not say to the sick of the palsy, 'Put money into this box,' but 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.' No words nor concep-

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tions can reach the atrocity and abomination of this Satanic invention: for, through this mean, the people are seduced from the purity and simplicity of that faith which, by relying on the gracious promises of God, alone justifies and obtains remission of sins; and they are led to put their trust in the pope's bulls, or in paying certain prescribed sums of money, or in their own works and satisfactions.

"I do therefore earnestly entreat the Christian reader, through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to expect moderation in me while I speak on this subject, roused as my spirit is with a just and rational resentment. Surely every Christian must be grieved to the very bottom of his heart, when he is daily compelled to see and put up with such impudent and outrageous blasphemy against God. The bishops, on account of this ONE thing, deserve far greater severity than I have ever used in all that I have said of them. Nay, the strongest language which I could possibly use, when my feelings are most vehement and indignant with reflecting on the insanity of such proceedings, would not reach the one thousandth part of their aggravated guilt. However, let no man suppose that what I now say against these ecclesiastical tyrants is applicable to a sound state of the church, or to true bishops or good pastors. Our present rulers are not bishops; they know nothing of the duty of a bishop; they are wolves and murderers; they are the Antichrists of the apostle; they would ruin mankind, and extinguish the Gospel. I wish to speak plainly, and, as it were, to perform the office of a public herald; and to make it manifest every where, that the bishops, who at present govern the greatest part of the world, are not of God's appointment, but have the foundation of their authority in the traditions of men and the delusions of Satan."

Luther's Bull.

Further, in the body of this spirited performance the author inserts what he calls the BULL AND

REFORMATION OF LUTHER, in contemptuous imitation and defiance of the papal bulls. It is to this effect:—"All persons who spend their lives and fortunes; and every faculty they possess, in endeavouring to overturn and extinguish the present diabolical constitution and government of the bishops, are to be esteemed as true Christians, fighting for the Gospel in opposition to the ministers of Satan. And though they may not absolutely succeed in their attempts, yet are they bound openly to condemn the said episcopal constitution, and to set their faces against it as an abomination. For whoever exhibits a voluntary obedience and subjection to that impious and tyrannical system, is so far a soldier of Satan, and at open war with the holy laws of God." CENT. XVI.

This is one of those passages in the writings of Luther, which has given great offence to the papists*, and has been produced by them as a direct proof of the seditious spirit of the Saxon Reformer. The reader of their animadversions would have been enabled to form a better judgment of the truth of their charge, and also of the candour and impartiality of those who made it, had they faithfully subjoined, as the case required, Luther's own distinct and express illustration of his meaning. Immediately after the declaration contained in his bull, he proceeds thus:—"These propositions I undertake to prove, even at the tribunal of Almighty God, by unanswerable arguments. The apostle Paul directs Titus to ordain bishops in every city; men, who should each of them be blameless, the husband of one wife, and whose character should agree with the rest of his description†. Such then is the mind of the Holy Spirit, speaking by the apostle Paul in the clearest terms. I call then on the bishops to defend themselves. They are at issue, not with me, but with the apostle Paul, and the Holy Spirit, which,

* Cochlæus. † Tit. chap. i. and ii.

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as Stephen said, they always resist. Is it not plain that these are they whose mouths must be stopped, because they subvert whole houses, and teach things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake?

Remarkable caution of Luther.

☞ Nevertheless, it should always be carefully observed, that when I speak of overturning or extinguishing the reign of the bishops, I would by no means be understood as though this resolution should be brought about by the sword, or by force, or by any species of tumultuary violence and compulsion: such destructive methods are totally inapplicable to this important business, which is indeed the cause of God. The kingdom of Antichrist, according to the prophet Daniel's prediction, must be broken WITHOUT HAND*; that is, the Scriptures will be understood by and by, and every one will speak and preach against the papal tyranny from the Word of God; until THIS MAN OF SIN is deserted by all his adherents, and dies of himself. This is the true Christian way of destroying him; and to promote this end, we ought to exert our utmost power, encounter every danger, and undergo every loss and inconvenience."

During this vehement exercise of the voice and pen of Luther on the one hand, and the sufferings of the protestants from the sharp sword of persecution on the other, the Word of God was preached, with much success, in several parts of Germany, particularly at Nuremberg, at Francfort on the Maine, at Ulm, and at Halle in Swabia. At Milberg the Gospel was taught by the learned protestant Reformer John Draco; also at Bremen and Magdeburg by two fugitive Augustine Monks, one of whom had stolen out of his prison at Antwerp, and the other had been forced to leave Halberstadt. At Zerbst, the finest city in the principality of Anhalt, Luther himself preached to a crowded audience in the Augustine monastery, with great effect on the minds of the people. The reformation was begun, likewise, at Stettin

* Dan viii. 25.

and Sunda, two very flourishing market-towns in the anterior Pomerania *. The inhabitants of the former requested two pastors to be sent to them from Wittemberg: at the latter, unfortunately, the Gospel was disgraced by the riotous proceedings of the tumultuous populace, who broke to pieces the images of the saints, and drove the monks from their monasteries in one day. A Danish domestic of Luther's appears to have sown the first seeds of Evangelical truth at Stolpen in the hinder Pomerania. Cnophius and Bugenhagius were schoolmasters of such great reputation at Treptow, that numerous pupils, not only from the neighbouring towns, but even from Livonia and Westphalia, came in quest of their instructions. Both these learned men, however, were so persecuted on account of their Lutheran principles, that Bugenhagius repaired to Wittemberg; and Cnophius, with his Livonian scholars also, left Treptow, applied himself to the ministry, travelled to Riga, Revel, and Dolpat, and in all those great cities, particularly Riga, inveighed against the popish abuses; and preached the leading doctrines of Christianity with much animation and fidelity. A turbulent colleague of Cnophius's instigated the inhabitants of Riga to commit various excesses, similar to those which had taken place at Wittemberg, through the indiscretion and violence of Carolstadt. Luther heard of the confusion, and wrote to the brethren there with the wisdom and affection of an apostle. "The leading doctrine," said he, "of all Christians, is faith in Christ; and the second is, love to our neighbour. But as to the selling of indulgences, worshipping of saints, and every other contrivance, which would make WORKS the foundation of the salvation of our souls, avoid and fly from all such things as from the most immediate and deadly poison. Moreover, sound Christians manifest their piety, by preserving their faith entire, their love unfeigned,

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* Comm. de Luth. cxxxix.

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and their hope of salvation sure, whatever afflictions may attend the open profession of religion; and not by abolishing such external ceremonies of human invention as may be allowed to remain without scandal or a breach of the divine commandments *." In the same letter he pronounced the Livonians truly happy, in having embraced the salutary doctrines of Christianity with so much sincerity and delight. They inhabited, as it were, the extremities of the world, and had great reason to rejoice that the Gospel had reached them: but they must not, he told them, expect to be free from persecution. He foresaw its approach; he exhorted them to behave with Christian fortitude and patience under trials; and endeavoured, by suitable advice in general, to prepare their minds for the afflictive discipline they might have to undergo. AT PRESENT indeed they might congratulate themselves on a comparative view of their situation with Germany, where the friends of evangelical liberty were grievously oppressed with the blasphemies of the popish princes and ecclesiastics, with sentences of pains and penalties, and even with fire and sword and bonds.

It appears from one of Luther's letters †, that even the Friezelanders had desired pastors to be sent to them from Wittemberg, and that Hamburgh had openly renounced the papal jurisdiction.

Caspar Hedio, Martin Bucer, and John Oecolampadius, are names famous in the history of the Reformation; and these servants of God were teaching the reformed religion in Alsace and Swisserland about the same time ‡.

Who can doubt but there might be made a most valuable selection of instructive facts and circumstances relative to the expulsion of ignorance and superstition, and the first appearances of evangelical

* Lib. II. Epist. and Melch. Adam. in Cnophio.

† Lib. II.

‡ See Appendix, for Sickingen; and Croneberg.

light, during the former part of this century, among the different nations of Europe? Much time, however, and perseverance, would be requisite for the execution of such a work. Many of the necessary authentic documents lie almost buried in obscurity and oblivion: and as they have not been judged proper for general history, or even worthy of it, the difficulty of collecting them increases every day. CENT. XVI.

To compare with any degree of accuracy the contemporary advancement of the dawnings of reformation in different places is no easy task; but so much, if I mistake not, is pretty manifest from this brief account, as may satisfy us, that the spirit of religious inquiry was greater, and the external progress at least of sound doctrine more rapid in many towns and districts than in the electorate of Saxony itself. We have frequently adverted to the reason of this; namely, the excessive caution of the elector himself, and the peculiar circumstances in which this pious prince was placed during the beginning of Luther's conflict with the Romish hierarchy. His maxims of mere connivance were found insufficient for the support of the Reformers and their disciples. Many of his subjects were advanced in scriptural knowledge, and listened to evangelical preaching with gladness; but they were not defended by the civil power from the tyranny of the ecclesiastics; much less were they encouraged in their religious pursuits by avowed declarations of Frederic and his court in favour of true Christian faith and Christian conduct. Hence dubious and timid minds would in many instances stand still, or perhaps withdraw themselves from danger and persecution; the sufferings of good men, and the menaces of the bigots in power, would naturally induce a more reserved profession of principle, as well as more languid exertions in practice; and thus the good seed sown might sometimes be entirely choked, or bring forth no fruit to perfection. All the accounts of the reformation in Saxony accord with these

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observations. Neither Frederic, nor, as yet, the duke John, his brother, afforded it any POSITIVE assistance. On all sides the truth resounded in the ears of the people, insomuch that earnest seeking souls could scarcely fail of meeting with the instruction they wanted; yet, as the government continued to stand almost neutral, it was frequently in the power of a bigoted magistrate or ecclesiastic lamentably to obstruct the free course of Christian doctrine. But, wherever the eyes of an able and industrious pastor, or even of a lay character of weight and distinction, were happily open to the excellency of the new system, the Gospel triumphed in a most surprising manner. Such, at that season, was the preparation of mens hearts for its reception.

The following little incident alone throws great light on the maxims of the elector. Hausman, the good pastor of Zwickau, had consulted Luther respecting some ecclesiastical concern, and had also requested him to interpose with the elector in the business. Luther's answer is as follows: "In my judgment it is by no means advisable to say one word to our illustrious prince concerning this matter. I am perfectly sure he would say nothing decisive on the point, but would at last direct you to consider and determine for yourselves. I know the temper of the man. He will allow many things to be done by others which he himself would not take upon himself either to advise or order. Do you therefore, and the senate of Zwickau, determine the affair to the best of your judgment."

There remain two striking testimonies, that have not yet been mentioned, of the great success which had attended the labours of Luther about the end of the year 1522.

1. Hartmuth of Croneberg near Francfort, a military knight, and a bold defender of the reformation, who himself had suffered exceedingly from the persecutions of the times, writes to Spalatinus in the

following remarkable strain. He acknowledges that he has received a little book from Luther, "that pious man, that man of God, that man sent by God;" and then adds, that "the Divine Word had taken such deep root, that, unless it should please God to withdraw his grace, it seemed impossible for human, or even Satanic means, to tear it from mens' hearts." All Luther's books were publicly exposed to sale in the shops at Francfort, notwithstanding the penalties threatened by the Imperial edict. CENT. XVI.

2. The other testimony is a very instructive extract from a letter of Frederic Canirmius, rector of an academy of Delft in Batavia*: the substance of which may be translated thus:

"Our adversaries, by mandates, epistles, and embassies, are daily meditating mischief against the Church; but the Lord infatuates the counsels of Ahithophel; and their attempts become ridiculous, as in the fable, when a little mouse was the production of the large mountain in labour. The monks of this place are as inimical to the truth as it is possible; but this I say, were we but allowed to preach ONCE in public, there would be an end of their whole institution, the pillars of which are already undermined, in a great measure, by a few little discourses of mine in my own academy. But we must wait with patience the good pleasure of God, who, while he sees us so very zealous, thinks proper to withhold his help, lest we should arrogantly ascribe success to our own endeavours. We should also remember, that our heavenly Father is not only careful to bring into a state of grace such as have never yet been called, but also to build up and establish those who are called, that they may remain stedfast in their vocation. As soon as he shall observe us no longer to depend on our own strivings, when Israel shall absolutely despair of deliverance, and shall put their WHOLE TRUST IN HIM, so that it shall have be-

* Scultet. Hist.

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come plain that he alone, in the midst of the people, undertakes the work; then it is that at length he will suddenly appear, with unexpected help, in defence of his church,—that all the praise and glory may belong to God. Amen. It grieves me to the heart to see Erasmus grow colder every day; and even disposed, as far as I can judge, to retract things which he said or wrote formerly with a degree of freedom. I see plainly his childish fears, which lead him to stand more in awe of losing the commendations of men than of God. Nicodemuses of this sort abound among us. However I doubt not but many of them would stand firmer, if we were allowed to publish openly the glorious doctrines of Christ, which alone can support burdened consciences."

The papal historians acknowledge with grief that Lutheranism had sadly increased in the latter part of 1522, and the beginning of 1523; and that the rapid ascendancy which it had gained appeared but too manifest at the diet of Nuremberg. But, without warrant from facts, they invidiously ascribe this happy revolution of sentiment to the temptation, which the new doctrines held out to the German princes and magistrates, of enriching themselves from the spoils of the church*.—The best answer to all such insinuations is the preceding very circumstantial narrative.

New Pope Adrian VI.

Adrian VI., who had formerly been preceptor to Charles V., had succeeded Leo X. in the popedom. He was a man of far greater sobriety and purity of manners than had been known for a long time among the pontiffs, and appears to have been unfeignedly desirous of reforming Christendom in general, and the court of Rome in particular. As it is not the design of this history to detail the selfish politics of intriguing cardinals in the election of their popes, it may be sufficient to observe, that the sincerer part of the Roman-catholics had sufficient reasons to approve the

* Maimbourg, 55.

elevation of Adrian to his new dignity. They looked on him as one of their best theologians; and boasted, that they could now oppose to the most learned heretics a pontiff, who was still more learned, and who had already shown his zeal against Luther, by the advice which he had given to the divines of Louvain in 1519*. CENT. XVI.

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FROM THE ELECTION OF ADRIAN VI. TO LUTHER'S LETTER TO THE DUKE OF SAVOY.

DIET OF NUREMBERG.
THEIR EDICT. LUTHER'S ADDRESS TO THE GERMAN PRINCES.
DEATH OF ADRIAN VI.
DANGEROUS SITUATION OF THE ELECTOR OF SAXONY.
DENMARK AND SWEDEN EMBRACE PROTESTANTISM.
THURZO.——J. HESSE.
MARTYRDOM OF VOES AND ESCH.
LUTHER'S LETTER TO THE DUKE OF SAVOY.

ONE of the first measures of the new pontiff was to send a legate† to the Imperial diet assembled at Nuremberg, with a diploma or brieve, as it is called, Diet of Nuremberg.

* See vol. iv. The Italian ecclesiastics did not much relish the election of Adrian VI. For, 1. he was a foreigner, and in their language, a barbarian. 2. Though a bitter anti-Lutheran, he certainly wished to reform the abuses of the court of Rome. And, 3. he had been known to maintain that "a pope might err, even in a matter of faith." L'Advocat. Dict.

† Francis Chieregato.

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addressed to the German princes. The brieve is full of the most virulent invectives against Luther; who, the pope said, "notwithstanding the sentence of Leo X., which was ordered by the edict of Worms to be executed without delay, continued to teach the same errors, and by his fresh publications daily to corrupt the morals of the people. The contagion of his poisoned tongue, like a pestilence, pervaded the country to a prodigious extent; and, what was the worst part of the mischief, he was supported not only by the vulgar, but by several persons of distinction, who had begun to shake off their obedience to the clergy, plunder them of their property, and raise civil commotions. The pope had hoped that a venomous plant of this sort could not have grown in Germany; whereas, in fact, it had taken root, and shot forth large boughs, through the negligence of those who ought to have prevented the evil. Surely it was a most unaccountable thing, that so large and so religious a nation should be seduced by a single pitiful friar, who had apostatized from the way which our Lord and his apostles, and the martyrs, and so many illustrious persons, and among the rest, the ancestors of the German princes, had all followed to the very present time!" "What," said he, "is Luther alone possessed of wisdom and of the Holy Spirit? Has the church been in ignorance till Luther afforded us this new light? Ridiculous! Be assured, ye princes of Germany, this Lutheran patronage of evangelical liberty is a mere pretence. Already ye must have discovered it to have been a cloak for robbery and violence; and ye cannot doubt that those who have torn and burnt the sacred canons, and the decrees of councils and popes, will have no respect for the laws of the empire. They have shaken off their obedience to bishops and priests; they will not spare the persons, houses, and goods of the laity."

Lastly, Adrian exhorted the diet to be unanimous in their endeavours to extinguish this devouring flame

of heresy, and bring back to a sense of their duty the arch-heretic and his abettors. But if the ulcerations and extent of the cancer appeared to be such as to leave no place for mild and lenient medicaments, recourse must be had to the cautery and the knife. CENT. XVI.

So the Almighty inflicted capital punishment on Dathan and Abiram, for their disobedience to the priest.

So PETER THE HEAD OF THE APOSTLES, denounced sudden death on Ananias and Sapphira; And,

So the ancestors of the German princes, at the council of Constance, inflicted condign punishment on John Huss and Jerome of Prague, heretics that seem to be now alive again in the person of Luther, their great admirer *.

It was below the dignity, even of a conscientious pontiff, to admit into a brieve, in which he was dealing out his threatenings against an obstinate heretic, any admixture of candid and ingenuous concession respecting the prevailing ecclesiastical abuses. In the instructions, however, given to his nuncio, we find acknowledgments of this kind which might even justify the most acrimonious accusations of Luther †. For example: Cheregato was first to inform the diet how much the pope was troubled on account of the progress of Lutheranism, and how necessary it was to adopt vigorous measures for its suppression. The design of this heretic was to destroy all authority and order under the sanction of Christian liberty. His sect was the cause of robberies, quarrels, and scandals. Mahomet had drawn men to his party by gratifying their sensual appetites; Luther seduced them in a similar way, by allowing monks, nuns, and lascivious priests to marry. The nuncio was then charged to OWN explicitly, that all this confusion was the effect of mens sins, particularly of the sins of the clergy and prelates; that for some years past MANY

Adrian's concessions.

* Goldast. Stat. Imp. i. 25. † Id. 27.

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ABUSES, ABOMINATIONS, and EXCESSES, had been committed in the court of Rome, even in the holy see itself; that every thing had degenerated to a great degree; and that it was no wonder if the evil had passed from THE HEAD to the members, from the popes to the bishops and other ecclesiastics. "We have all," says the pope, "every one of us, turned to his own way, and for a long time, none hath done good, no not one. Let us give glory to God, and humble our souls before him; and every individual among us consider how great has been his own fall, and judge himself, that God may not judge us in his wrath. Nothing shall be wanting on my part to reform the court of Rome, whence, perhaps, all the mischief hath originated; that as this court hath been the source of the corruptions which have thence spread among the lower orders, so from the same a sound reformation may proceed." He concluded with observing how much he had this business at heart; but that they must not wonder if ALL these abuses could not be SOON corrected. The disease was complicated and inveterate, and the cure must proceed step by step, lest by attempting to do all at once, every thing should be thrown into confusion.

In regard to the schism which Luther had made in the church, the pope requested the diet to inform him what methods they themselves judged most expedient for suppressing it.

The cardinals at Rome are said to have been much displeased at the candid concessions of Adrian; though Sleidan, on this occasion, intimates*, that the pontiff's long and elaborate promises of his intentions to reform the church probably amounted to no more than an artifice, often employed by the popes, to raise men's expectations, delay the calling of a general council, and gain time for sounding the dispositions of princes; and for taking, meanwhile, effectual

* Comment. III.

measures to secure the apostolical power and dignity. Luther appears to have thought the same; for he translated the pontifical mandates into German, and added short marginal notes; one of which on the expression "the cure must proceed step by step," is sufficiently sarcastic, namely,—"You are to understand those words to mean that there must be an interval of SOME AGES between each step."

Whatever suspicion may be excited respecting the perfect sincerity of Adrian's promises to reform the ecclesiastical state, it is impossible to doubt the validity of his testimony to the existence of the prevailing abuses; nor need we wish for a more complete confutation of the adulatory strains with which interested parasites were incessantly complimenting the Roman pontiffs. Moreover, as the life and conversation of the new pope was in fact decorous and laudable, it seems but reasonable that he should in general have credit for his 'declarations,' when he assured the German diet, "that he would not have accepted the papacy, unless it had been to meliorate the condition of the catholic church, to comfort the oppressed, to prefer and reward neglected men of merit and virtue, and, in fine, to do all the duties of a lawful successor of St. Peter." If these good designs were never carried into execution, there are two very substantial reasons for the failure. 1. The veteran hypocrites, with whom Adrian was surrounded at Rome, were too much interested in supporting the ancient corruptions of the papal domination, and too well skilled in the arts of obstructing any schemes of correction and amendment, to suffer the intended innovations to succeed, particularly as they were proposed by a pope declining in years, and ignorant of the ways of the world *. 2. As this pontiff applied his thoughts

* Nothing can show the true spirit of popery more plainly, than the observations of the celebrated historian Pallavicinus on the character of Adrian VI. and on his promises of reformation. "He was headstrong in his designs; and these were

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merely to morals, and did not suspect any unsoundness of doctrine in the established creed, his attempts were fundamentally defective, and therefore, as to the event, unpromising in the last degree. It is indeed, at all times much easier to discover external than internal evils in the church; and hence, the complaints and resolutions of prelates, whose morals were more exemplary than those of their contemporaries or of their predecessors, have been frequent from age to age, and yet productive of no material good effects. We are assured from the best authority, that "A CORRUPT TREE cannot bring forth GOOD FRUIT."

The publication of the pope's brieve, and his explanatory instructions in the diet, seemed, at first, to have made a strong impression on a great part of that assembly; and as his nuncio, among other things*, had accused the clergy of Nuremberg of preaching impious doctrines, and insisted on their being imprisoned, the bishops, and other dignitaries of the sacred order, stood up, and with immense

formed from abstract speculations, specious in appearance, but by no means suited to practice. There was in him a simplicity and a credulity, which made him listen to those who found fault with the conduct of his predecessor Leo. X. Then he was too vehement, too open, and too sincere, and most excessively imprudent in making a public acknowledgment of the corruptions of the Roman court." This historian proceeds to tell us, that the POPEDOM is a mixture of sacred and profane dominion; and that therefore its administration requires a deal of knowledge in civil concerns, and in the arts of government; and we are to understand that, for his part, he would rather choose that the head of the church should be a man of MODERATE SANCTITY, JOINED WITH EXTRAORDINARY PRUDENCE, THAN ONE WHOSE PRUDENCE WAS BUT OF THE MIDDLE SORT, WHATEVER MIGHT BE HIS CHARACTER FOR HOLINESS.

We need not wonder that such principles as these should lead Pallavicinus to disapprove of Adrian's projected emendations of the church; and to maintain, that the protestants would thereby have been encouraged: whereas, according to him, "the flames of their treason were not to be extinguished by concessions, but quenched by showers of blood."

* Sleidan IV.

clamour called out, "Luther MUST be TAKEN OFF*, and the propagators of his sentiments MUST be imprisoned!" It soon appeared, however, that the German princes were in no disposition either to be soothed by the flatteries, or overawed by the menaces of a Roman pontiff. They told the nuncio, they believed he had been ill informed respecting the conduct of the preachers at Nuremberg, who, in truth, were at that moment held in high estimation by the people; and that therefore if any harsh measures should be adopted against them, there would soon be a general outcry, that a design was purposely formed to oppress the cause of truth, and this might lead to sedition and civil commotions †. CENT. XVI. The answer of the German princes.

In regard to the pope's complaints concerning Luther and his sect, they said in general, that they were always ready to do their utmost to root out heresies of every kind, but that they had omitted to execute the edict of Worms for the most weighty and urgent reasons. It was a fact, that all ranks and orders made heavy complaints against the court of Rome, and were now, through Luther's various discourses and writings, so well convinced of the justice of these accusations, that any attempt, in the present juncture, to execute by force the late damnatory sentence of the pope and emperor, would inevitably be attended with the most dangerous consequences. The people would instantly interpret such a procedure as a certain prelude to the oppression of evangelical light and truth, and to the further maintenance of those impieties and abuses which could no longer be borne; and thus Germany would soon be involved in tumults, rebellion, and civil wars. The princes therefore could not but think that a trial ought to be made of expedients less inflammatory in their nature, and better suited to the circumstances.

They applauded the pope's pious intention to

* Alten. II. "Tolendum esse Lutherum."
† Sleidan.

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reform the court of Rome, which he had ingenuously owned to be the source of all the mischief. This was truly laudable; but there were moreover particular grievances and abuses, an account of which they purposed to exhibit in a distinct memorial: these required effectual redress; and, if not obtained, they knew it would be in vain to expect the eradication of errors, and the re-establishment of peace and harmony among the ecclesiastical and secular orders in Germany. As the pope had condescended to ask their advice, they said they would not dissemble in their answer. His holiness was by no means to imagine that the members of the diet had their eyes SOLELY on the business of Luther, but also on a multitude of other evils, which had taken deep root by long usage, and through the ignorance of some and the wickedness of others. For all these things, the most efficacious remedy which they could devise was, that the pope, with the consent of the emperor, should speedily appoint a free, godly, and Christian council, to be held in some convenient part of Germany, as Strasburg, Mentz, or Cologne; and that full liberty should be granted to every member of it, ecclesiastical or secular, to speak and give advice, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Lastly, they promised that, in the mean time, they would request the elector of Saxony to interpose his authority, and prevent the Lutheran party from printing books, or preaching sermons, on subjects of a seditious tendency; and that, in general, they would do their utmost to confine the preachers, for the present, to the exposition of the plain, pure Gospel of Christ, and make them wait for the determination of the future council respecting all doubtful controversial matters. Also the bishops, and the archbishops should appoint virtuous and learned men in their respective dioceses, to superintend the parochial clergy, whose business it should be to

correct their errors and irregularities, as occasion required, with kindness and moderation; but by no means in such a manner as to excite just suspicion of a design to prevent the promulgation of Christian truth. As to the priests who had married wives, or the monks who had left their convents, they conceived it sufficient if the ordinaries inflicted the canonical punishments on the offenders. The civil laws had made no provision for such cases. But if these same refractory priests should be found guilty of any crimes of a different nature, then the prince or magistrate, in whose jurisdiction the offences were committed, should take care to enforce a due execution of the existing laws *.

This answer of the diet was delivered in writing to Cheregato, the pope's legate, who ventured to express his disapprobation of it in strong terms. Neither his most holy master, he said, nor the emperor, nor any Christian prince, had ever expected to hear such language from the diet. Since the solemn condemnation of Luther, that incurable heretic had not only persevered in his old errors, but had also been guilty of many new transgressions. His punishment, therefore, ought not to have been lessened, but increased on that account. Their negligence in this matter was offensive to God, to the pope, and to the emperor. The reasons alleged by the diet in excuse were by no means satisfactory: men ought to suffer any inconveniences rather than endanger the catholic unity and the salvation of souls. He therefore most earnestly besought them, before the conclusion of their meetings, to agree upon the complete execution of the sentence against Luther.

Their manner, he said, of requesting a general council was such as might give umbrage to his holy master. For example, they had required that it should be with the consent of the emperor, that it

* Goldast. Stat. Imp. i. 30.

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should be free, and that it should be held in this or that city, and such like. All this had the appearance of tying up the hands of his holiness. Moreover, the legate expressed himself very much displeased with their promise to prevent, as much as they could, the printing and vending of heretical books. "I say," said he, "on this point as I do of the rest, THE SENTENCES OF THE POPE AND THE EMPEROR OUGHT TO BE IMPLICITLY OBEYED; the books SHOULD BE BURNT, and THE PRINTERS AND VENDERS OF THEM DULY PUNISHED. There is no other way to suppress and extinguish this pernicious sect. It is from the reading of their books that all these evils have arisen."

Lastly, he allowed that the answer of the diet concerning the married clergy would not have displeased him, if there had not been a sting in the tail of it, namely, in the observation that the secular princes or magistrates should take proper cognizance of the offenders. "Now," said he, "if by these words we are to understand that such offenders are to be punished by their proper ecclesiastical judges, it is very right; but if the explanation of them is, that they are to be tried by the secular jurisdiction, I do most earnestly desire the diet to correct this part of their answer, as being, in principle, directly contrary to the rights of the church. The secular magistrates have no authority over those who are once under the dominion of Christ and the church; neither do those priests or monks who have broken their vows, or have otherwise apostatized, cease, for that reason, to be still under the same ecclesiastical jurisdiction."

This reply of the pope's nuncio gave great offence in the diet. They observed, that he had shown a quick sense of whatever seemed to threaten a diminution of the papal authority or papal emolument, but little disposition to relieve Germany from the

grievous oppressions under which it laboured. Instead therefore of multiplying words in the form of a long rejoinder, they said they had other business to transact of still greater consequence; and directed Cheregato to be content with their former resolution, till they could send a NATIONAL MEMORIAL to the pope, and receive the answer of his holiness respecting all their GRIEVANCES*. It would then be seen what reliance ought to be placed on the fair promises of the nuncio of the Roman pontiff. CENT. XVI.

Cheregato thought proper to quit Nuremberg before the memorial was drawn up. His sudden departure was considered as disrespectful to the diet, and prognosticated an unfavourable issue to the whole business. Pope's nuncio leaves Nuremberg.

The German nation, in the time of the emperor Maximilian, had exhibited an accusation of ten grievances against the court of Rome. The number of these in the present new memorial were increased to a hundred; and are known by the name of the Centum Gravamina, so famous in the German annals. The articles of complaint were arranged in order, and immediately dispatched to Rome, accompanied with a concise but memorable protest, to the following effect:—That the diet had laid all their grievances before the legate of his holiness, and had intended to furnish him with an exact and orderly copy of them for the perusal of his master, but he had surprised them by disappearing suddenly and unexpectedly: That they humbly besought the pope to redress their grievances effectually; and moreover, wished his holiness to understand, that if they were not redressed, and speedily too, the burden of them was become so oppressive and insupportable, that the princes and people in general neither COULD nor WOULD endure them any longer†. Imperious necessity itself, and the iniquity Remonstrance of the Germans.

* Paul Sarpi. Orthuin. Grat. Du Pin. Goldast. i. 33—58.

† Goldast. Peror. Cent. Grav. Sleidan.

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of the multiplied extortions and oppressions under which they groaned, would compel them to use every method, with which God had intrusted them, to deliver themselves from the tyranny of the ecclesiastics.

These transactions were a decisive proof of the declining power of the popedom, and at the same time they manifested the hardy and daring spirit which had arisen among the German nations in support of their civil and religious liberties.

The hundred grievances.

It would be tedious to relate the hundred grievances at length. In substance they may be reduced to these heads:—1. Complaints of large payments for dispensations, absolutions, and indulgences. By these things not only immense sums were squeezed out of the Germans, but a door opened to all sorts of crimes; and moreover, the money thus collected was consumed by the popes in maintaining the luxury of their families and relations. 2. The injuries done by directing ecclesiastical causes to be tried at Rome, rather than in their proper places by German ordinaries. 3. The artifices of the Romish court in the reservation of benefices. 4. The abuses of commendams and first-fruits. 5. The exemptions of the ecclesiastics in criminal causes. 6. The introduction of excommunications into temporal concerns; and the illegality of excommunicating several persons for one man's offence. 7. The encroachments of the ecclesiastical judges in lay causes, under divers pretences, and their scandalous sentences. 8. The shameful exactions of the clergy for administering the sacraments, and for burials and masses, and for licenses to keep concubines. 9. The faculties granted to the pope's legate, to legitimate bastards and bestow benefices. 10. The monks and nuns in Germany were allowed to be heirs to their own relations; but the contrary was forbidden; their relations were unjustly prohibited from becoming heirs to them.

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The diet concluded their complaints with observing, that they could specify many more and still heavier oppressions, from which in equity they ought to be relieved; but they were disposed to say nothing of them, till it should appear, whether they were likely to obtain justice respecting those already enumerated.

In fact they were all reducible to three heads; namely, grievances or oppressions, tending to enslave the people, to rob them of their money, or to appropriate to the clergy the jurisdiction of the secular magistrate.

The elector of Saxony was not present at the diet of Nuremberg. The infirmities of his advanced age, the natural irresolution of his temper, or the prospect of contentious and troublesome scenes concerning Luther, or lastly, all these things put together, will easily account for his absence.—The pope at this time appears to have been excessively out of humour with this prince. Two pontifical brieves, addressed to the elector, were transmitted to him by Cheregato from Nuremberg; the former of which is expressed in the most severe, imperious, and insulting language*; and even in the latter, which the Italian historian† calls an affectionate letter, Adrian roundly charges the conscientious Frederic with a breach of promise made to cardinal Cajetan; namely, that he would not fail to punish Luther as soon as ever he should be proscribed by the pope, whereas it was well known that that heretic was allowed to remain in the electorate of Saxony, and was also encouraged and supported

* See the Appendix for this long brieve. It is a great curiosity, as it demonstrates the prodigiously high ideas which the popes entertained of their own dignity and consequence; and with what outrageous insolence they could express their displeasure, when, like Adrian, they were unrestrained by political motives and a knowledge of mankind.—See also Labbei Concil. Tom. xiv.

† Pallavicini.

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there, not only after the pope's sentence against him, but also after the imperial edict of Charles V.

Frederic the Wise was so much offended with these accusations of the pope, that he seems for a moment to have forgotten those discreet maxims by which he had constantly regulated his conduct.

John Planitz was a German nobleman, who represented the elector of Saxony in the imperial council of regency at Nuremberg. To him the prince, by letter, freely expressed his indignation at the contents of the pontifical brieve. With more than ordinary warmth, he declared that he had never imagined it possible he should receive so extraordinary a letter, and he was inclined to suspect it had been forged at Nuremberg. He wished the pope's legate to be told that he himself would write to the council of regency, and express his readiness to appear before them and the emperor, for the purpose of defending his conduct against all unjust aspersions. Planitz, however, who appears to have been a sincere friend of the Reformer's *, represented to

* Some judgment may be formed of the character of this wary privy counsellor of the elector of Saxony, from a letter which he wrote to his master during the sittings of the diet at Nuremberg.

"The pope, by his large promises, would make us believe that he intends to redress many of our grievances. But I make no scruple to declare plainly, that I give him no credit for sincerity. I look upon all his fine speeches as thrown out for the single purpose of aggrandizing the power and wealth of the Romish church. This has been the constant practice of the pontiffs hitherto; and the event will show whether a different system is now beginning to be adopted. For my part, I can expect no equitable decisions from the pope, till he makes the glory of Christ, and the salvation of mankind, to be the ruling motives of his conduct. And if such were, indeed, his present motives, why should he have thought it necessary to write to Ferdinand, the brother and representative of the emperor, as you will perceive by the inclosed copy, he has done, TO INSTIGATE HIM TO USE A ROD? He might as well have spoken out at once, and said A ROD OF IRON. Surely if he were a shepherd of Christ's flock, he would think it his duty to cultivate peace, to investigate the truth, and to prevent errors and schisms, by mild, and

his master the imprudence of intrusting his reputation with so partial a tribunal as the imperial council of regency. He foresaw, he said, that much injury to the cause of protestantism would be the infallible consequence of such a measure; and that therefore the elector had better content himself with returning only general answers to the pope's objections. Frederic was easily persuaded to abandon a resolution so opposite to his usual system of caution and evasion, and so uncertain and dangerous in the issue of the experiment. Accordingly he transmitted his defence in writing to Adrian himself, expressed concisely, and in the most general terms; and to his legate Cheregato he directed a brief explanation to be given of the line of conduct which he had prescribed to himself throughout the whole business of Luther. The elector deemed it but decent to avoid all personal altercation with the pope; but to his legate he positively insisted on the fact, that he had never made any other promise to Cajetan, than that, "in the hope of putting an end to the ecclesiastical dissensions, he would stand engaged to compel Luther to appear before the cardinal at Augsburg *."

This conscientious prince, amidst all the doubts and difficulties which harassed his mind concerning the just limits of the papal jurisdiction, and several other questions relative to the rights of the ecclesiastics, steadily adhered to the grand practical maxim of implicitly obeying the revealed word of God, and also of maintaining with zeal and fidelity the unrestrained publication of the same among the people. He was much displeased with some parts of the diet's reply to Cheregato, particularly that which seemed to threaten the Clergy with a species of inquisition

not by compulsory methods. I firmly trust, however, that Almighty God will protect his own glory, and forward the salvation of men, in a way very different from that which suits the notions of the Roman Pontiff." Tom. II. Alten.

* Pallavic. Orthuin. Grat. Paul. Sarpi.

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that would inevitably fetter them in their preaching, and obstruct the free progress of the Gospel. Agreeably to this truly Christian view of evangelical liberty, he directed, before the final resolutions of the diet, a formal protest to be entered in his name against every restraint of that kind.

Edict of the diet. A. D. 1523.

The resolutions were made in March 1523, and accorded with the answer which had been given to the pope's legate. They were called, notwithstanding the emperor's absence, The Edict of Charles V., and were printed and published throughout Germany, together with the pope's brieve, and his instructions to his nuncio; also with the answers and replies, and the hundred grievances *.

These transactions, and the publication of them, were, on the whole, undoubtedly favourable to the reformation.

Luther instantly saw his advantage, and availed himself of it with that undaunted courage which constantly marked his character, and also with a defensive dexterity which was the result of much experience in repelling the incessant attacks of his enemies.

Luther's address to the princes.

He published an address to the princes and noblemen of Germany, in which he gratefully acknowledged the satisfaction which their late edict had afforded him; but he had observed, he said, that there were many persons, and even some of rank and distinction, who were disposed to wrest the mandates of the diet from their true meaning.—"That meaning," said Luther, "is to me as clear as the light; and therefore I judge it highly expedient at this time to publish my sentiments on this matter, as also the sentiments of those who agree with me in interpreting the doctrines of the Gospel.

"1. And first, the edict directs us to teach the Gospel in that sense which has been approved by the church of Christ. Now there are numbers who

* Goldast. stat. Imp. ii. 150.

would misrepresent this injunction, as though Christians ought to follow the scholastic opinions of Thomas Aquinas, Scotus, and others that are held in high estimation by the Romish Church. Whereas in the edict we find no mention of these authors, nor even of the Romish church itself, but only of the church of Christ, and of the ancient interpreters of Christian doctrine; that is, as WE understand it, of Hilary, Cyprian, and Augustine, whose authority we allow to be great, yet on no occasion such as to be produced in opposition to the holy Scriptures. CENT. XVI.

"When the diet, therefore, commands us to preach the Gospel in its purity, it is most absurd to suppose that they intend the scholastic trifles of Aristotle to be looked on as the standard of evangelical truth. For if that were the case, what need could there be to call a general council? That the former is the genuine sense of the edict." said Luther, "I argue also from this well-known circumstance; namely, that several of the princes, who have hitherto obstinately opposed every attempt at reformation in religion, have also refused to subscribe this resolution of the diet, and now do their utmost to prevent the publication of it among their subjects. To speak plainly, our adversaries neither know what the Gospel is, nor what were the doctrines of the ancient ecclesiastical writers; so immersed are they in those contentious, sophistical disputations, which the diet now commands us to lay aside. 'You must preach the Gospel:' So said Jesus Christ; and it is easy for the diet to repeat the words of the injunction; but how will they ensure obedience to it? For our part, we promise the most prompt obedience; and through God's help, we will keep our promise. But it is with grief that I am compelled to own, that the church of Rome cannot possibly obey this imperial edict. For, alas! they HAVE no preachers of the Gospel. Moreover, if they were but willing to preach the pure Gospel

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of Christ, there would at once be a most glorious termination of all our dissensions!—The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. We must therefore pray our heavenly Father that he would send labourers into his harvest: We cannot procure them by our own exertions, neither can the emperor by his edicts bestow them on the church; They are the gift of heaven. The schools and the colleges of the priests and monks do not furnish them.

"2. Likewise, where," continued Luther, "will the bishops find learned theologians to superintend the preachings of the clergy, and correct their mistakes by peaceable, mild, and affectionate exhortations, agreeably both to the letter and spirit of this edict? In vain will they look for such characters in the schools and monasteries, or universities: besides—a most wonderful change must take place in the whole department of our ecclesiastical rulers themselves. Their present system is that of coercion, by flames, anathemas, and excommunications. Had they treated me in the Christian manner now recommended by the princes, their own affairs would have been in a much better condition. God grant they may at length profit from the wholesome admonitions of this edict!"

He then proceeds thus:

"3. That article of the edict which prohibits the printing and vending of all books which have not been inspected and approved by proper judges, is entirely agreeable to a practical rule agreed upon in our university at Wittemberg during the last year. The publication of the Scriptures however must in no way be fettered; and this is the only exception.

"4. And now, ye most kind and benevolent princes," exclaimed the author, "I must entreat you to mitigate in some respects the severity of your decree against the marriage of the clergy,

Consider the revealed will of God, and consider the snares to which the pitiable weaknesses of men are exposed by a compulsion of this sort. I am sure that many, who are at present angry with me for not supporting the Romish system of celibacy, did they but know what I do of the interior practices of the monasteries, would instantly join me in wishing those hiding-places to be levelled with the ground, rather than that they should afford occasion to the commission of such dreadful impieties.

"Your consideration, however, in restraining the punishments of the married ecclesiastics to the penalties of the canon law, implies a severe animadversion on those cruel bishops and princes, who have hitherto been accustomed to torment such offenders against the pope's laws with perpetual imprisonments, and even with death itself, as if they had committed the most atrocious crimes.

"And I am ready to own further, that, though it is too hard to deprive a pious and faithful clergyman of his benefice, and thereby of his maintenance, for no other fault but because he has contracted an honourable marriage, yet, if the former most important part of your decree, which enjoins the teaching of the Gospel in its purity, be but duly observed, it will necessarily follow that the rigour of the canon law will IN PRACTICE be mitigated by the legitimate prevalence of evangelical principles. Hath not our Saviour determined, that ONLY those are to be expelled from the church, who are convicted of manifest crimes, and obstinately refuse to listen to wholesome reproof? But there is no crime in marrying a wife, or leaving a monastery. And lastly, I cannot but observe, that there is no instance of a clergyman's losing either income or dignity on account of the sin of fornication."

The greatest advantage, which Luther and his cause derived from the decisions of the diet of Nuremberg, has not yet been mentioned; namely, the

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virtual suspension of the imperial edict of Worms. This, in the present juncture, proved a heavy disappointment on the expectations of the papal party, and the rather, as the duration of the suspension was in fact left undefined, depending on the proceedings of a future general council, the very assembling of which they sincerely deprecated, and at all times did their best to procrastinate.

Accordingly, Luther boldly asserted his right to draw this inference from the terms in which the princes had expressed their edict. "By this decree," said he, "I do maintain that Martin Luther stands absolved from all the consequences of the former sentence of the pope and emperor, until a future council shall have tried his cause, and pronounced their definite sentence. For if this is not the meaning of the decree, I am at a loss to find any other; neither can I understand what else can be the design of this suspension of judgment, and this appeal to a general council."

On the contrary, the transactions of the diet of Nuremberg produced much discontent at Rome. The papal courtiers not only derided the childish simplicity of Adrian, in acknowledging disorders in the church which he ought to have concealed, but also censured severely the impolitic expostulations of Cheregato in his reply to the answer of the princes. It was his duty, they said, in the matters of less importance, to have given a favourable construction to some expressions of the diet, and to have connived at others which were less defensible; and in the mean time to have stretched every nerve to the utmost to procure the condemnation of Luther: whereas, by making nice and subtle distinctions, and insisting too much on the precise explanations of particular words, he had increased the ill humour of those determined audacious Germans, and had effected nothing to the advantage of the Roman See: nay, worse than nothing: The

authority of the church was weakened; the sources of its wealth were stopped; and the heretics would doubtless become more daring and presumptuous than ever. CENT. XVI.

These sagacious Italians were not much mistaken in their prognostication. Luther and his disciples, in all their controversial writings after this period, often appealed to the testimony of Adrian, and to the HUNDRED GRIEVANCES enumerated by the representatives of the Germanic body, in confirmation of what they affirmed respecting the abuses and corruptions of the Romish court. The pope himself, if we may credit his historian*, was on the one hand astonished at the obstinacy of the reformers, and on the other, disgusted with the dissolute manners of his courtiers; and not being able to correct either the one or the other, sincerely wished himself again in the more humble situation of dean of Louvain†! Adrian died soon after he had received from his legate the account of what had passed at Nuremberg. Death of Adrian.

During all these trying scenes, the Saxon champion of the reformation exhibited a noble example of Christian faith, courage and resignation. "It is impossible," said he, in a letter to Spalatinus, "that I can be silent when the divine truth is in danger. To propagate the Gospel is the sole object

* Jov. Vit. Ad.

† Adrian was born at Utrecht, of mean parents. He was made dean of St. Peter's, at Louvain, and afterwards provost at Utrecht. Being appointed tutor to prince Charles of Austria, king Ferdinand made him bishop of Tortosa; and through Leo. X. he attained to the cardinal's hat. Upon his exaltation to the papacy, the people of Utrecht and Holland showed so much joy, that they wrote upon the tapestry hangings and the walls of their houses, "Utrecht has planted, Louvain watered, and the emperor given the increase:"—Under which an arch fellow wrote, "God has done nothing at all in this matter." His epitaph deserves to be recorded:—"Here lies Adrian VI., who esteemed the papal government to be the greatest misfortune of his life." Brandt.

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of all my writings. Never do I take up my pen for the purpose of injuring any one. John Faber, vicar of Constance, has recently attacked my doctrines in a work printed at Leipsic. Emser also is about to publish something hostile. For me to pass by these things without notice would be to betray the truth: moreover, the late edict itself expressly provides against all attempts to obstruct the progress of the Gospel. For my part I have no fears. The doctrines which I teach, I am sure are of God; and I am ready to suffer patiently on their account whatsoever it shall please him to inflict upon me." This letter appears to have been written in reply to the elector, who, in consequence of the late edict, had probably warned Luther afresh to be extremely moderate in his style. The diet, inconsistently, it should seem, with the mild, conciliatory terms of their edict, had commissioned the vicar of Constance to oppose Lutheranism throughout Germany. Our Reformer, in such circumstances, could not remain an indolent spectator of the machinations of his adversaries.

Observe also another memorable instance of the disinterested courage and resolution of this extraordinary man. The elector and his court had apprehended so much danger to Luther from the diet of Nuremberg, that they would gladly have persuaded him to have once more returned to a place of concealment. "No, no," says he, in a letter to the same friend, "Imagine not that I will again hide myself in a corner, however madly the monsters may rage.

"I perfectly well remember, dear friend, what I wrote to the prince from Borna*; and I wish you would all be induced to believe the contents of that letter. You have now had the most manifest proofs that the hand of God is in this business; for this is the second year in which, beyond the expectation of

* Page 50.

every one, I am yet alive; and the elector is not only safe, but also finds the fury of his brethren of the Germanic body less violent than during the preceding year. Our prince has not DESIGNEDLY involved himself in this religious contest: no; it is by the providence of God alone that he finds himself at all concerned in it; and Jesus Christ will have no difficulty to defend him. However, if I could but, without actually disgracing the Gospel, perceive a way of separating him from my difficulties and dangers, I would not hesitate to give up my life. I had fully expected and hoped, that, within the year, I should have been dragged to suffer death; and that was the method of liberating him from danger to which I alluded in my letter,—if indeed such would have been the consequence of my destruction. It appears very plain that at present we are not able to investigate or comprehend the divine counsels; and therefore it will be the safest for us to say, in a spirit of humble resignation, 'THY WILL BE DONE.'" CENT. XVI.

Thus did Luther, in the full conviction of the justice and importance of the cause which he supported, constantly look with a single eye to the protection of that Being, through whose providence he was made an honoured instrument of the revival of Christian truth and liberty. He considered the triumph of the Gospel as a sure event, and at no great distance; he rejoiced in the prospect of it; he had not the smallest anxiety on account of his own personal safety; and he laboured to impress the mind of his prince with similar sentiments of pious expectation, confidence, and fortitude.

Critical situation of the elector of Saxony about the beginning of the year 1523.

The situation of the elector of Saxony was at this time such as to require all the encouragement and advice which his religious and political friends could supply. The duke George had almost persuaded the regency at Nuremberg to OBLIGE Frederic to punish Luther; but this blow was warded by telling

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the duke, that, as he had been particularly offended by the Reformer, it would be more proper for him to apply alone to the elector for redress. Planitz, during the sittings of the regency, informed his master the elector, "that for the last three months, whenever any question had been moved respecting Luther, there had always broken out such a flaming spirit of obstinate resistance to the Gospel, that he feared God in his anger would inflict some heavy judgment upon so irreligious a country." Yet the members of this very regency, in their late deliberations, had displayed a disposition much more inclined to equity and moderation than on former occasions; insomuch that the Suabian league, as it was called, were supposed to be concerting violent measures, which had for their objects both the ruin of the elector of Saxony and the dissolution of the regency of Nuremberg.—The conduct of the duke George at this critical juncture was not a little suspicious. At Nuremberg he spake freely of the danger with which his nephews Frederic and John were threatened, of losing their possessions and rank in the empire; and he refused to take his seat in the regency, alleging as a reason, that the princes whom Luther, in his writings, had charged with the commisson of high crimes, ought to prove themselves innocent before they were admitted to offices of trust and authority. His real designs, however, were easily discerned through this political finesse. If the nephews of George should eventually, on account of their attachment to the reformation, be plundered and degraded, their uncle, it was believed, hoped to be proportionally enriched, and exalted; and moreover, the example of extraordinary conscientiousness and self-denial of the duke, in declining to act in an important official situation, because he at that time laboured under the accusations of Luther, was, no doubt, intended by him to facilitate the introduction of a resolution

among the princes, that all persons proscribed by the edict of Worms should be deprived of their rights, privileges, and possessions. For if so great purity of character was required of men in public situations of dignity and trust, that the grave, the religious duke George had refused to take his seat among the regents till he had acquitted himself of the calumnies of Luther, how could any other member of the Germanic body, whatever might be his rank or title, pretend to a just claim of precedence and sovereignty, while, either directly or indirectly, he remained under the BAN of the empire by the legitimate decision of the diet of Worms? CENT. XVI.

The hypocrisy, avarice, and ambition, which could suggest to the mind of this prince so flimsy a pretext, for the purpose of aggrandizing his own fortunes by the ruin of those of his near relations, have cast an indelible stain on the memory of the duke George of Saxony.

How striking is the contrast, and how honourable to the cause of religion, when we compare the conduct of Frederic and of Luther at this period with that of their enemies!

The elector, though oppressed with age and infirmities, was still in the full possession of his intellectual faculties, and continued to merit the appellation of Frederic the Wise. His penetrating eye foresaw the conspiracy which was then forming by the pope, the emperor, and several of the most bigoted of the German princes, with the express intent of crushing the infant reformation, and also every power that was friendly to its progress. But neither the firmness nor the integrity of this good prince, whenever the course he should steer seemed distinct and certain, could be shaken by the most alarming appearances *. In this

* This part of the character of the elector of Saxony has been already abundantly exemplified. The timidity and ambiguity of conduct which appeared in this prince on some occasions arose from doubts in his understanding, not from defect of

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year, 1523, he is well known to have secretly meditated the defence of himself and his persecuted subjects, even by FORCE *; but was interrupted by entertaining serious doubts concerning the lawfulness of using arms under his very peculiar circumstances. For however disgusted Frederic might be with the political intrigues of Adrian and Charles V., or however indignant on account of the many tyrannical oppressions of the civil and ecclesiastical rulers, it was not his practice to give way to resentment or revenge, but rather to seek relief to his anxious and burdened mind by a diligent investigation of his duty. Accordingly, he solemnly required Luther, Bugenhagius, and Melancthon, to write their deliberate sentiments on the following question, "Whether it was lawful for the elector of Saxony, in case his subjects, on account of their religion, should suffer violence either from the emperor or any of the German princes, to protect them by arms." These great and good men decided at once, THAT IT WAS NOT LAWFUL; and principally for these reasons. 1. The princes were not yet fully convinced in their consciences of the truth of the reformed system of evangelical doctrine. 2. Neither had their subjects implored their protection against violence and persecution. 3. Nor had the several states of the provinces deliberated on the point. 4. Lastly, Those, who in their own defence have recourse to arms, ought, before all things, to be assured of the justice of their cause †.

Thus, notwithstanding the success with which the reformation had hitherto been attended, there seemed rising considerable obstacles to its further

courage or honesty; and here again, not so much from doubts of existing grievances, as from scruples of conscience respecting that degree of resistance which, in redressing the grievances, he might be justified in making to the established authorities.

* Hortleder. Histor.

† Hortleder the historian had in his possession the original of this answer. Seck. 263.

progress.—Luther disdained to hide himself a second time from the fury of his adversaries; and his friend Frederic, from scruples of conscience, did not dare to draw the sword in his defence. Both the Saxon elector and the Saxon reformer appeared, therefore, to be in most critical and perilous situations; and the wisest advocates of Lutheranism did not see how the loss of either of them could be repaired. In fact, the powers of Antichrist were now roused, and become outrageous; and had shown symptoms of an intention to collect their strength, and to act in concert, with more system and decision than they had hitherto done from the commencement of the ecclesiastical dissensions. CENT. XVI.

The clouds, however, which seemed to thicken over the elector of Saxony, his subjects and his dominions, were soon dispersed, through the wise dispositions of that kind, overruling Providence, on which Luther entirely relied, and which in its secret counsels, had determined to break the rod of the oppressor*, and to bestow on the nations the blessings of a revival of Christian truth and Christian liberty. The emperor was so much involved in multiplied schemes of enterprise and ambition, that he found it impossible to give any serious and durable attention to the contests in Germany; and it soon appeared, that without his active co-operation, the rest of the confederates could effect nothing decisive. The apprehensions therefore of Frederic and his ministers, respecting the safety of his electorate, or the necessity of a defensive war, were much relieved; and the patient industrious reformers had only to struggle with their usual difficulties, arising from the persecutions of such individuals as frequently happened to be unfortunate victims of cruel bigots in possession of power.—Among the unrelenting tyrants of this class, is particularly distinguished the archduke Ferdinand, the brother of Charles V., who was so

* Isaiah, ix.

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much inflamed with resentment against the Saxon reformer and his cause, that he declared, he had much rather his sister, the queen of Denmark, had been sunk in the depths of the sea, than that she should ever have conversed with Luther at Wittemberg.

The unfortunate queen, whom we have just mentioned, was compelled to seek an asylum out of Denmark, with her exiled husband Christiern the Second, who in the year 1523 fled from Copenhagen with twenty ships, together with his queen and children, and all his private treasure. This unhappy prince, in his passage to the continent, was overtaken by a violent tempest, which dispersed his fleet, and reduced him to the last extremity. At length he arrived with his family at Tervere in Zeeland *, dispatched a messenger to his brother-in-law Charles V., and entertained the most sanguine hopes that, through the assistance of so powerful an ally, he should soon be restored to his former dignity and possessions. His queen Elizabeth also came to Nuremberg, to implore the help of her brother Ferdinand and of the German princes. But unfortunately for this object, she had received many of Luther's books from Albert duke of Prussia, had made an open profession of the reformed religion, and in 1524 had publicly received the sacrament in both kinds. This last step so provoked Ferdinand, that he told her in plain terms, "he heartily wished she was not his sister." "Certainly," replied the queen, "we are descended from one and the same mother; nevertheless, I must adhere closely to the word of God, and to that ONLY, without the least respect to persons; in all other concerns, I am ready to obey my brother's pleasure; and if, on that account, he refuses to own me for his sister, I shall endeavour to bear the cross with patience." On the subject of her own calamitous situation, as well as that of her husband, she is said

Death of the queen of Denmark.

* Meursii Histor. Danica.

to have expressed herself so pathetically before the princes, as to have constrained every one present to shed tears. She obtained from them, however, no satifactory promises of assistance; and this excellent queen soon after departed this life, her death being probably hastened by affliction and misfortune, and the unkind treatment of her nearest relations. She was buried at Ghent*; and her husband informed Luther, that, notwithstanding the very great pains which had been taken by persons of the greatest distinction to persuade her to return to popery, she had received the Lord's supper according to the just ordinance of Christ, and died in the exercise of sound and lively evangelical faith.

Progress of Protestantism in Denmark and Sweden.

The two northern kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden were now uniting themselves to the cause of Protestantism; and as the religious revolutions in those regions were brilliant and rapid, they must, no doubt, eventually have been productive of much spiritual good. Our account of this happy change in the north must, however, be brief, because little, except the political and external circumstances, has found its way into authentic history.

Martin sent from Wittemberg to preach to the Danes. A. D. 1522.

In the year 1522, at the request of Christiern II., king of Denmark, a preacher named Martin was sent from Wittemberg; and his evangelical labours among the Danes received the royal approbation and encouragement. But the enormous vices of this prince, which would have disgraced any religious system, proved an effectual bar to the progress of the Reformation. Expelled from his throne on account of his tyranny, profligacy, and cruelties, and forced to wander through a foreign country in want and disgrace, he discovered some symptoms of compunction and even of repentance. At least, during his intercourse among his religious friends, his external conduct indicated a grave and decorous attention to

* In the beginning of 1525. Chytræus.

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Christiern II. visits the elector of Saxony. A. D. 1523.

spiritual concerns. We find him in the year 1523 visiting his uncle, the elector of Saxony, at Schweinitz, a town belonging to this prince; and, in the autumn of the same year, he sent for Luther from Wittemberg, and heard him preach at the same town, in the palace of Frederic, with so great satisfaction, that he declared in his whole life he had never before heard the Gospel so explained; and that while he lived, he should never forget that sermon; and moreover, that, with God's help, he should endure more patiently whatever might befal him. Still, I fear, if the plan of this history admitted a circumstantial detail of the crimes committed by Christiern II. while he sat on his throne, the charity and candour of the reader would be put to a severe trial in admitting, without some further substantial evidence, the probability of the genuine conversion of so infamous a character. His public apology, or defence of his conduct, dispersed throughout Germany, though to the last degree affecting and lamentable, exhibits but little of the spirit of a truly humble penitent. The reflection, however, of Luther on his case may deserve to be transcribed. "Perhaps," said he, "God in his appointed time will call this king and queen to his heavenly kingdom, that he may appear marvellous in confounding the measures of human foresight; for most certainly he is a king of whose sound and thorough reformation our judgments could never reasonably have formed any favourable conjectures."

Frederic the duke of Holstein succeeded his nephew Christiern II., in the throne of Denmark; and under him, and still more under his successor Christiern III., the blessed change of the religious establishment was completed in that kingdom.—Of Christiern II. little more is known, than that on returning into Denmark, and making some attempts to recover his throne, he was taken prisoner, and ended his days in captivity.

The judicious student of ecclesiastical history can

scarcely fail to reflect how extremely palpable the wickedness and folly of the popish system must have been, when the opposition of a prince so notoriously cruel, and in every respect unprincipled, as Christiern II., was able so effectually to shake its foundations, that it could never after recover either credit or stability in Denmark.

I know no evidence that Elizabeth, the good queen of Christiern II., was in any degree a partner with her husband in his injustice and cruelty; and Luther justly observes, that, if she could but have been persuaded to deny the Gospel of Christ, she might, perhaps, have been restored to her kingdom, through the active interference of her powerful brothers, Charles the emperor, and Ferdinand the archduke *. Charles V., about this time, was beginning to astonish all Europe with the blaze of secular glory, and was also cruelly persecuting the people of God throughout Flanders. The Christian reader, who finds no satisfaction in the contemplation of such scenes of ambition and iniquity, will willingly retire from them, and learn useful instruction from a serious review of the dealings of Providence with the near relative of the emperor, the exiled queen of Denmark. This extraordinary personage, after a severe discipline of humiliating afflictions, died in peace; and there is very solid ground to hope that the sister found rest in the application of that Gospel to the relief of her spiritual necessities, which the brother denominated heresy, schism, and sedition.

The religious revolutions of Holstein, a duchy bordering on Denmark, well deserve a place in this narrative. Several students of divinity from that country had visited the university of Wittemberg, induced by what they had heard of Luther's talents and learning. On their return, it soon apeared that they had caught the salutary flame which had already exhilarated the hearts of so many foreigners.

* Comment. de Luth. XLII.

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Both in public and in private, among their countrymen, they most industriously spread the reformation they had obtained from their great Saxon master.

Herman Tast preaches at Husum, A. D. 1522.

Herman Tast, in the year 1522, was the first, who, when he found the church at Husum shut against him by the popish clergy, preached boldly under a tree in the churchyard, a course of most excellent sermons to a numerous audience: and this same pastor also two years after preached at Gardingen the first public sermon which was ever composed according to the sound principles of the reformed religion, and delivered in a regular way from the pulpit in that country: for in 1524 Frederic I., king of Denmark and duke of Holstein, made it a capital offence for any person to take away the life, or injure the property or dignity of another, on account of his religion, whether Papal or Lutheran. This prince, in matters of religion, allowed all his subjects a most complete toleration. They were so to conduct themselves, as best to satisfy their own consciences before God. At the same time, however, he ordered the most solemn and explicit directions to be given, that the errors of the Romish church should be publicly reprobated, and the evangelical doctrines of the reformers recommended to the people. But the inhabitants of Ditmarsen, an intractable race of men, refused to obey the king's edict, and committed to the flames, in this same year, Henry Muller, a zealous preacher of pure Christianity, who had formerly been prior of the monastery at Antwerp, had afterwards preached two years at Bremen, and lastly had been introduced among the savage Ditmarsians by their superintendant, a man of piety and religion. In other parts of Frederic's dominions the royal edict was dutifully obeyed, and proved a great bulwark against the violence and cruelty of the papists. Under its protection the Lutheran ministers confronted and engaged their adversaries by the methods of fair argumentation; and were wonderfully succes-

Martyrdom of Henry Muller, A. D. 1524.

ful in propagating divine truth. Even some of the Roman champions acknowledged their convictions, and bowed to the authority of reason and Scripture. Others, meanwhile, persevered in their inveterate prejudices, and continued to support a pertinacious opposition to the Lutheran doctrines. Very remarkable is the case of a certain monk of the isle of Fore. This man, who had travelled from home for the express purpose of exhorting his neighbouring fraternity to remain faithful and constant to the papal superstitions, declared, that he wished he might never again reach his habitation alive and safe if the Romish creed was not true. In his return, he fell from his horse, and was killed on the spot. "And thus," says the author of this account, "the event corresponded with the imprecation; and a pile of stones, which was raised in memory of it, points out at this day to travellers the place where the thing happened." —Profane readers or writers, in a profane age, may treat with contempt the introduction of such a relation as this into sober, authentic history; but their taste does not seem a sufficient reason for omitting a brief but circumstantial narration of a fact which so judicious a person as Seckendorff thought worthy of notice, and which, moreover, as he particularly informs us, was transmitted to him by Dr. Kortholt, a man of most excellent character, and a very eminent divine of the university of Kiel in the duchy of Holstein.

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Story of a monk of the isle of Fore.

In Sweden, the renowned Gustavus Vasa, having in his youth lived an exile at Lubec, and there gained some information concerning the grounds of Lutheranism, and having afterwards been further instructed by Laurentius and Olaus Petri, two disciples of Luther, no sooner saw himself in firm possession of the throne than he determined to reform the church. Under his auspices a public disputation was held at Upsal, between Olaus Petri * on one

* See Appendix. Olaus Petri.

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side, in support of Luther's system, and Peter Galle on the other, as defender of the papal dogmas; and the sum of their argumentation was afterwards published. Also, by the king's order, Andreas his chancellor was employed in translating the Scriptures into the Swedish language; and no means were omitted for enlightening the minds of the people. The effects were rapid and decisive, and Sweden from that day has ranked invariably among the protestant nations.

Gustavus Vasa promotes the Reformation.

A royal proclamation by Gustavus, in substance as follows, must have been extremely beneficial to the reformers. "We do not deny that our care is for the true religion founded on the word of God. There can be no better religion than that which Christ and his apostles have delivered to us. Here there is no place for dispute. But, respecting certain ceremonies questions are raised, and more especially respecting the privileges of the clergy. It is true, that we find learned men are desirous of abolishing several useless external rites, but there is not the least ground for calumniating us, as though we wished to introduce any other religion than that which is truly Christian. Our single aim is, to worship God in spirit and truth, and to become a partaker of the joys of heaven with all Christ's faithful servants. Let not our beloved subjects, therefore, listen to slanderous reports concerning their sovereign; but remain assured that our thoughts are employed how we may best promote the glory of God, and their eternal welfare. It is not long ago, since we learnt what fraudulent means the Roman pontiff has employed to drain this kingdom of large sums of money, through the institution of private masses and indulgences. And in regard to other countries, men of the best information have proved, beyond contradiction, by what variety of deceitful methods the bishops and other ecclesiastical dignitaries make a gain of the simple; and how they burden wretched

consciences, and multiply acts of hypocrisy. The luxurious prelates now see that these evil practices are detected and exposed by persons of the greatest piety and knowledge; and therefore they set their faces against the truth with all their might, and cry out Innovation and Heresy! But, believe them not.—We seriously exhort you to believe them not; for there is not one word of truth in their malicious accusations*."

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Let no one, however, conclude that this glorious triumph of religious truth took place without much clamour and opposition from the established hierarchy. Antichrist was seriously alarmed, and exerted his utmost efforts to prevent the fall of his tottering pillars.—The preceding proclamation sufficiently intimates this.—

In fact, the dignified clergy, and their adherents in the convocation at Upsal, boldly maintained that no person, under pain of excommunication and eternal damnation, could on any account whatever deprive the prelates of their wealth and privileges.

Convocation at Upsal. A. D. 1526.

To this the king and the friends of the Reformation coolly replied, "That true ministers of the church, especially those who diligently instructed the people, deserved more than a decent maintenance; they were worthy even 'of double honour;' but that the lazy and licentious drones, who neither served God nor man, ought to have no public stipend whatever: moreover, that there was not one syllable in the Scriptures to justify that immense political power and revenue which the clergy had usurped, and which had enabled them, for some centuries past, to withstand their lawful governors, and disturb kingdoms with endless wars and seditions."

The contest was now advancing fast to a crisis. The monks, and the rest of the papal clergy, observed no bounds in their resentment. Throughout Sweden, and also in foreign countries, they calum-

* Baazius Histor.

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niated their excellent king as a heretic, and unworthy of the throne. In Dalecarlia they even excited the people to seditious and treasonable practices; and because the kingdom happened then to suffer grievously from a great scarcity of corn, they taught the vulgar to believe that the present famine was a judgment of Almighty God on the country, for receiving the new religion. By such artifices of the bishops and priests, the inhabitants of many provinces became so disaffected to the government, that they refused to pay their annual taxes.

Yet the Swedish monarch had already done every thing in the cause of Christian truth which could be expected from a pious, wise, and magnanimous prince. Like king David, he had begun with reforming his own court; and suffered none but religious characters to approach his person, or to fill the great offices of state. He had instituted a GENERAL VISITATION of the whole country BY HIMSELF, in which he was accompanied by evangelical preachers, and particularly by that excellent Lutheran theologian, Olaus Petri, whom he had previously appointed Secretary of Stockholm. In adopting this admirable measure, the king had proposed to instruct his ignorant subjects in the great principles of the Christian religion, and to guard them against erroneous notions concerning faith and works, and predestination; and also against the innumerable corruptions of the Romish Church. Moreover, in the execution of it he had listened to the advice of the experienced German reformers; namely, not to hurt the tender consciences of the well-meaning but uninformed part of the people, by an over-hasty abolition of such ceremonies and superstitions, as might be suffered to remain without manifest impiety. This moderation was become the more necessary, because in Sweden, as formerly in Germany, there had arisen, in the early part of the Reformation, fanatics of the anabaptist class, who excited the people to the most

outrageous acts of tumult and sedition. At Stockholm, they had entered the great church of St. John, and in the most audacious manner had removed, or broken to pieces, the organs, statues, and images therein; and their riotous example was followed throughout almost every part of the kingdom. CENT. XVI.

At this moment the situation of Sweden seems to have been truly critical. On the one hand, an enthusiastic zeal for innovation, and on the other, a blind attachment to superstitious ceremonies, inflamed the minds of many, and divided them into parties; and there was constantly at hand an active, ambitious, and powerful clergy, ready to take every advantage of these internal dissentions. It soon appeared, however, that, even in this perilous conjuncture, there existed in Gustavus a combination of qualities fully equal to the emergency.

This determined prince, in the summer of the year 1527, at the Convocation of Arosen, summoned together all the constituted orders and authorities, ecclesiastical and civil, in his dominions, with the full purpose of bringing to speedy issue the important question concerning the regulation of the doctrines, the revenues, and the powers of the church. He directed the senators of the kingdom to be placed next to the throne, and the bishops next to the senators. The nobles occupied the third class, the parochial clergy the fourth, and the commons the fifth. This arrangement was an unpardonable offence in the eyes of the bishops; and the extraordinary measure which they instantly adopted in consequence, strongly marks the domineering spirit of the Roman catholic clergy, and shows also how entirely regardless they were of observing good faith with those who did not exhibit implicit obedience to the papal system. They met secretly in the church of St. Giles, to deliberate on their present situation. "What is to be done, my brethren?" said the bishop of Linkioping: "It is plain enough the king means to degrade

Convocation at Arosen. A. D. 1527.

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us: he means to take from us those castles and fortified places which pious kings have of old granted to the bishops of this country; and probably his next step will be to deprive us of our lands and revenues." Two of the junior and more moderate bishops answered, "Let us not contest the matter with his majesty: for if we have no secular possessions, we cannot be called upon to contribute to the defence of the state." "This is a most serious business," replied the bishop of Linkioping: "If we make these concessions, we shall bring upon ourselves the indignation and eternal anathema of the Roman pontiff. Kings and emperors, in former times, have made similar attempts upon the property of the clergy, but were deterred from executing their designs, by the dread of pontifical excommunication. Make your choice then, brethren, never to disobey the pope: he is the asylum of the church, and he will defend you." Every one present declared his firm resolution to defend the Roman pontiff and the established hierarchy; and they subscribed a solemn protest against any degradation of their dignity, or diminution of revenue. They then buried the writing under a sepulchre, covered it with stones, and took a solemn oath not to reveal the secret. But it was dug up fifteen years afterwards, and shown to Gustavus, as a proof of the treachery of the papal bishops, at the commencement of the Reformation.

In this memorable convocation, Gustavus, through his chancellor, complained heavily of the indolence, luxury, and impiety of the superior clergy; and also of the excessive ill usage which he had personally received from the papal faction. They had every where represented him as a heretic, a teacher of novel doctrines, and as one who endeavoured to disseminate among the people a corrupt religion. He had reprimanded, he said, the archbishop of Upsal for neglect of duty, and, in particular, had ordered him to take care that the Bible should be

translated into the Swedish language; but that that prelate, instead of obeying his directions, and reforming the abuses in the church, had maliciously excited tumults and seditions among his good subjects, afterwards plundered the inferior clergy, and at last fled with much wealth from his country. In brief, and agreeably to what he had stated in his proclamation, he wished the faithful, laborious clergy, to be well rewarded; at the same time that he would have the ignorant, the idle, and the useless, to be deprived of the revenues which they so undeservedly possessed, and which ought to be applied to the public service. If a speedy emendation to this effect was not agreed to by the bishops and senate, he would no longer undertake the government of the country. On this head, therefore, he required a clear and categorical answer. CENT. XVI.

Upon hearing the king's proposal, the convocation was almost in an uproar. The prelates, and other papal adherents, cried No! No! with the utmost clamour, and called loudly on the leading men of the country, to withstand such unjust innovations.

But the pious and disinterested Gustavus had formed a resolution, from which even the splendor of a crown could not induce him to depart. He came into the assembly, and there publicly resigned the government of the kingdom. With some warmth, but with great decency and firmness, he informed them, that he had made his choice, and that his conscience did not permit him to support a superstitious and depraved system of religion. He added, that he had determined to leave the country, but expected them to pay him the price of his hereditary possessions.

The great body of the Swedish representatives, namely, the COMMONS in the convocation, were now so much enraged at the conduct of the refractory bishops, as to signify to them in terms by no means obscure, that, if they did not instantly

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comply with the pleasure of their beloved sovereign, they would soon feel the vengeance of the people inflicted on their obstinacy and disobedience. Moreover, that the reasonableness of the king's demand might be placed in the clearest light, it was agreed that Peter Galle and Olaus Petri should once more try their strength publicly, in dispute, on the question of ecclesiastical power and privilege, as they had formerly done on the controverted points of evangelical doctrine. The combatants met accordingly; and Olaus Petri, the Lutheran disciple, spoke in the Swedish language; but the papal advocate, P. Galle, persisted in the use of Latin, till the whole audience exclaimed aloud, "Say what you have to say in the Swedish language!"

This free discussion had a mighty influence on all the members of the convocation, except the most violent and determined partisans of popery, who on the third day of the session were completely overpowered with numbers. This memorable assembly concluded its proceedings, by humbly beseeching Gustavus to resume his government, and by precisely defining the ecclesiastical privileges and revenues. Among their several regulations and decrees, published with the king's signature, there is this clause: "No one shall be ordained a clergyman who is either unwilling to preach, or who does not know how to preach the pure word of God*."

This curious and instructive account of the beginning of the Reformation in Sweden may well deserve a place in these memoirs: and when it is considered that the disciples of Luther were the chief instruments of its success, it can scarcely be deemed a digression from the subject of this chapter. It may be said, indeed, and with great probability of truth, that under a prince of less pious dispositions and less splendid talents than those of the renowned

* Baazius.

Swedish monarch, the puny efforts of two or three evangelical teachers could have availed but little against the whole weight and prevalence of the papal influence: but this is in fact no more than to affirm, what no believer of a Divine Providence will deny, that, whenever the great Disposer of all events purposes either to visit mankind with penal judgments, or bless them with merciful dispensations, he is INFALLIBLE in exactly proportioning his means to those ends, which, in the depth and wisdom of his counsels he has previously designed shall surely come to pass. CENT. XVI.

The reformation in Sweden continued to proceed with vigour and discretion, under the protection of Gustavus Vasa, and principally through the advice of his secretary Olaus Petri, who, in the year 1529, published a more distinct explanation of the great Christian doctrine of Justification by faith, and also a new ritual in the Swedish language, in which the official rules for marriage, baptism, burial of the dead, and the administration of the Lord's supper, were very much cleared from Romish superstitions and encumbrances*. The Reformation proceeds in Sweden, protected by Gustavus Vasa. A. D. 1529.

" How delightful a spectacle to a true Christian, to see distinctly, and, as it were, with his own eyes, a contest on the spot between Christ and Antichrist!" Such is the observation of a pious and excellent annalist, to whom we are indebted for much of the preceding information concerning the revival of evangelical doctrine throughout Europe

* Appendix. Olaus Petri.

The resolutions of the states assembled at Arosen (or Westeraas, as it is otherwise called,) did not tend to fix or regulate many doctrinal articles, but rather to reduce the clergy to a more dependent condition. These, by repeated grants from a superstitious nobility, were become opulent, dissolute, and luxurious; and moreover they possessed so many castles and places of strength, that they were able, at any time, to excite dangerous commotions in the kingdom, and even to give laws to the sovereign himself. On the other hand, the men of rank

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in this period *. "Whatever machinations," continues the same author, "either the pope or the emperor and his creatures devised for the purpose of obstructing the progress of CHRISTIAN TRUTH, Jesus Christ overruled them all to the advantage and furtherance of the same. The bull of the pope, the thunder of the emperor, did not frighten men, but, on the contrary, animated them to embrace the Gospel." In fact, the blessed Reformation was spreading itself far and wide; and almost all the European nations hailed the dawn of truth, and exulted in the prospect of spiritual freedom.

and family were impoverished beyond example, through the rapacity of a devouring, insatiable hierarchy. It was in vain, therefore, until this enormous power of the numerous prelates, acting in concert with the Roman pontiff at their head, was restrained within moderate bounds, to expect any substantial reformation of the ecclesiastical establishment. When the edicts of Westeraas had settled this indispensable preliminary, and not before, Gustavus condescended to resume the sceptre, and bless his subjects with a purer religion.

The mixture of firmness and moderation displayed by this monarch, in all these transactions, is truly admirable. By imprisoning, and afterwards banishing, several of the disciples of Munzer, who had been convicted of committing riots at Stockholm, and by other instances of well-timed severity, he soon repressed the dangerous spirit both of fanaticism and sedition, which had disturbed the peace of the country. And further, by directing translations of the Scriptures into the Swedish language to be every where dispersed among the people, he invited the more judicious part of his subjects to exercise their own judgments in religious concerns, and thus prepared their minds for the salutary emendations gradually introduced afterwards by Olaus into the formularies and confessions of the Swedish church. Lastly, though no specific system of doctrine was adopted at Westeraas, yet the mere provision of intelligent pastors, to preach throughout the kingdom the pure word of God to the people, in their native language, must have been found extremely efficient in promoting the same excellent purposes. Add to all this, that the progress of evangelical light and truth, through the different districts and provinces, was become abundantly more rapid, since Olaus, in the public disputation at Upsal, had gained so very signal a victory over his opponent P. Galle, the zealous defender of the ancient Romish corruptions.

* Abraham. Scultet. Annal. Evang.

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In Hungary, even in the year 1522, the fame of the deliverance of various states and provinces from papal chains had excited in the minds of the people a most prodigious desire not only to become partakers of the pure reformed religion, but also to see Luther himself, from whose instructions they expected to derive, in the easiest and happiest way, the best system of heavenly doctrine, and also the wisest method of cultivating sacred learning.—among the young students who came from this country to Wittemberg, with the intention of consulting Luther and hearing his lectures, Martinus Cyriac is particularly mentioned as the first who appears from the academical registers to have been matriculated in this year, when Philip Melancthon was rector or provost of the university.

Also in Hungary. A. D. 1522.

Lewis the king of Hungary and Bohemia was a bitter enemy of the reformers; but Divine Providence raised them up an excellent and powerful patron in George marquis of Brandenburg. This illustrious prince began about the same time to discover a relish for evangelical knowledge; and, as he was grand-master of the royal household, he had frequent opportunities of softening or entirely doing away the charges and complaints which were frequently laid before the king against the disciples of Luther. Under his auspices, and those of the dukes of Lignitz and Munsterberg, a considerable reformation took place among the churches in Silesia, and particularly at Breslaw, the capital city of that country; and it appears that in the succeeding year the inhabitants of these regions were blessed with an additional influx of the salutary and refreshing beams of the light of the Gospel *.

And among the churches of Silesia. A. D. 1523.

It would be inexcusable to omit in this history of the Church of Christ, a short, but precious fragment of biography relative to John Thurzo, bishop of Breslaw in Silesia. This good prelate was

Thurzo, the good bishop of Breslaw.

* Scultet. 1522.

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descended from a noble family in Hungary, and is said to have been the very first papal bishop who in his diocese was favourable to the revival of pure Christianity.

Melancthon.

The very little that is known of Thurzo is to be collected from a concise epistle of Luther, and another still more concise of Melancthon, addressed to him so early as the year 1520. He did not live to receive either of them; and Luther, on the occasion of his decease, says in a letter to a friend, "In this faith died John Thurzo bishop of Breslaw, of all the bishops of this age the very best *."

Luther writes to Thurzo in 1520, a little before his death.

Luther, in his letter to the dying prelate, expressed his feelings thus: "Not only myself, but the church of God, very much sympathizes with you, Reverend father, in your present sickness. For it is a lamentable truth, both that there are now actually few SUCH bishops, and, also, that there never existed a greater need of them. However, I have a good hope, that the hand which has inflicted your malady, will itself heal you; and that HE, who has furnished you, Reverend father, with such extraordinary gifts, will enable you to go through all the trials to which his holy will shall call you, with a firm Christian spirit, and like a faithful bishop. But if the church must be deprived of you, then may HE, who is all-powerful to promote the good of his faithful people, whether it be by your life or your death, be pleased to bless the event to their profit, according to the riches of his good will. I do not write this on the supposition of its being necessary to strengthen you in the Lord, —though indeed who is so strong as not to need sometimes the help even of his weakest brother?—, but from a belief in that communion of saints ordained by Christ, which makes all the faithful partakers both of the blessings and of the burdens of each other. Thus, Reverend father, your sickness,

* II. Ep. 7.

or, if it so please God, your death, is to be considered as a common evil; yet on the other hand it is a delightful reflection, that WE suffer or rejoice with you, and that Jesus Christ also, who is ever in the very centre of our hearts, rejoices with us all when we rejoice, and when we suffer, is touched with our infirmities. Your former letters afforded me great satisfaction; they are full of charity and humility." CENT. XVI.

Melancthon's letter to Thurzo does not advert to the bishop's ill state of health, but contains the following passage: "Who is there that does not think highly of the man, who, as far as I know, is the only person in Germany, that by his authority, learning, and piety, has exhibited an example of what a bishop ought to be? If the Christian world could but enumerate ten characters of this stamp, or, as it is in Homer, of this spirit and way of thinking, I should not doubt of seeing the kingdom of Christ again restored."

The pious Thurzo died in August 1520; but the Reformation does not appear to have suffered materially from this loss. His successor, James of Saltza, trode in his steps. This bishop appointed, with the entire approbation of the inhabitants, John Hesse of Nuremberg, who was a learned doctor of divinity, and a dear friend of Luther, to preach the Gospel in the church of St. M. Magdalen at Breslaw. Hesse not only explained and enforced the great truths of Christianity from the pulpit, but for eight days together, in a public disputation, defended the same, and exposed the papal dogmas concerning the mass and the celibacy of the clergy.—The name of Ambrose Moiban is mentioned as his coadjutor in preaching, and that of Valentine Trocedorf in the disputation. The report of these proceedings was as agreeable to Luther as it proved vexatious to the pope. The latter was so much out of humour with the magistrates of Breslaw, on account of their late

Thurzo dies. A. D. 1520.

J. Hesse of Nuremberg.

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ecclesiastical appointments, and their protection of the novel doctrines, that he wrote a letter to them full of censures and menaces. This however had no other effect than to induce them to defend their conduct in a printed apology, which contains a most lively description of the corrupt manners of their former pastors, as well as of the wretched state of the ecclesiastical government in general. Thus happily proceeded the Reformation in Silesia. In defiance of the pope, the senate and the inhabitants of Breslaw retained and supported John Hesse in the pastoral office to which they had chosen him; and he died after having discharged the ministerial office in the same city during the space of twenty-five years*. Moreover, about the same time was established in the duchy of Lignitz a school of considerable reputation, the preceptors and governors of which had all been educated in the university of Wittemberg†.

Death of Hesse.

The cross, however,—the constant attendant, in some shape or other, on true religion,—was now severely felt by Lutherans, in every place where papal enmity had an opportunity of exerting itself with effect. Lewis king of Hungary and Bohemia, not content with making formal complaints to the elector of Saxony of the patronage afforded by that prince to the arch-heretic Luther, inflicted great severities on such of his own subjects as received the protestant tenets. His principal agent in this business was the bishop of Olmutz. Then in Misnia and Thuringia the unrelenting George of Saxony laboured to extirpate evangelical truth by imprisonment, fines, banishment, and at length by capital punishments. Even his brother Henry, duke of Friberg, who had shown some symptoms of good-will to the reformers, overawed by this determined persecutor, ejected from his house and the company of his duchess three ladies

* See Appendix. Hesse. See also Seck. 270—271, and Melancth. Ep. III. 126.

† Scultet. et Melchior Adam.

of noble birth, merely because they had been guilty of reading Luther's books. Similar cruelties were practised in other parts, particularly at Miltenberg*; the protestants of which town are said to have been the first who were exposed to the violence of the military on account of their religion. John Draco †, their pastor, fled to save his life; and Luther wrote to his afflicted congregation an admirable consolatory letter, in which he declares, that it would soon appear that if in one place the doctrine of the word was oppressed, it would rise again in ten others. It grieved him, he said, exceedingly, that those who approved his sentiments should be called Lutherans rather than lovers of the Gospel; nevertheless the doctrine would stand whether he lived or died, or however the adversaries might rage; yet he owned that the progress of the true faith met with melancholy impediments from the want of practical godliness, and particularly of the spirit of prayer ‡. CENT. XVI.

But the persecution of Flanders was the most ferocious. There Aleander, armed with the authority of the pope, and supported by the united power of the inquisition and of the civil government, exercised the vengeance of the hierarchy without mercy. The writings of Luther had infected the Augustinian monks at Antwerp. Some of them were imprisoned, and recanted; but three, in spite of persuasion, threats, and long confinement, remained steady §. These were publicly stript of their holy orders, and declared heretics on a scaffold at Brussels, about the middle of the year 1523. Persecution in Flanders.

* Sometimes called Milteburg, Mildeberg, or even Milberg; but this last with less propriety. See p. 94, near the bottom. It is situated on the Maine, in the electorate of Mentz.

† Erasmus says of this Draco, "that he was a youth of so sweet a temper, and of such blameless morals, that no good man could fail to love him." Epistol.

‡ Ep. II. 185. See Appendix. Draco. § Brandt.

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Martyrdom of Voes and Esch.

Two of the three, viz. Henry Voes and John Esch, cheerfully underwent the fiery trial on the same day, testifying a wonderful constancy. As they were led to the stake, they cried with a loud voice that they were Christians; and when they were fastened to it, and the fire was kindled, they rehearsed the Creed, and after that sang the verses alternately of Te Deum laudamus till the flames deprived them of voice and life.—Voes confessed before the inquisitors, that he had been brought to the knowledge of the Gospel by Luther's writings. "What," said they, "has Luther the Spirit of God?" No reply.—"You are seduced by Luther:" "I am seduced," answered Voes, "in the same manner as the apostles were by Christ."

This was the first blood that was shed in the Low Countries in the cause of religion, since the rise of Luther. The two martyrs exhibited throughout the conflict astonishing proofs of piety, patience, and constancy. The whole is finely described by a very learned person who was an eye-witness of their sufferings*.

The name of the third was Lambert, who, according to Luther, received the crown of martyrdom in like manner at the stake, four days after†. Erasmus says, he was taken back to prison, and there PRIVATELY dispatched‡. This author, who certainly hated these abominable cruelties of the papists, observes upon the occasion, that Brussels had been most perfectly free from heretics till this event; but that many of the inhabitants, immediately after, began to favour Lutheranism §.

In fact, the modest deportment, together with the unshaken fortitude of the sufferers, made a great

* See Appendix. Voes, &c.

† Luth. Ep. II. 148. Lambert succeeded James Spreng in the priory of Antwerp. See Note toward the end of Chap. VI. in preceding volume.

‡ Erasm. ep. Utenhovio, 1207. § Id. Kretzero, 1361.

impression on the public mind. The martyrs were deemed innocent, and the judges, who had condemned them, unjust and cruel. The friars, to counteract the effect of such dangerous sentiments, circulated every where, in their sermons, and their conversation, a ridiculous story, that the souls of these holy men were saved through the intercession of the Virgin Mary; that one of them had appeared since his death, and revealed this important information; affirming, at the same time, that in their very last moments they had repented and abjured the heresies of Luther. Though some colour might be given to this fable from the circumstance of the bloody scene having taken place on the first of July, the day before the Visitation of the blessed Virgin, yet the people rejected the imposture with contempt. The persons who stood nearest to the martyrs denied the fact; and so did the executioner himself, when the question was put to him, whether they had discovered any marks of penitence *.

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Luther, in memory of these faithful servants of God, composed a Latin hymn, which has been much used in the protestant churches †. He likewise dispersed a circular letter among the brethren in Holland, Brabant, and Flanders; in which he says, Blessed be God; we, who have hitherto been worshipping idols celebrated by men of a pretended sanctity, have seen and heard of real saints and martyrs in our own age. Those two precious souls, Henry Voes and John Esch, counted their lives as nothing worth, provided by their deaths the Gospel trumpet of Christ alone might be resounded more fully and clearly. What a slight matter is it to be ignominiously treated, and even put to death by men of this world!—a slight matter indeed to those who are persuaded that their blood is precious in the sight of the Lord. We of the Upper Germany have not yet been so far honoured as to suffer death for the name of Christ,

* Eras. Ep. 1207. Scultet. 182. † Beausobre.

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though some of us have lived and still live in a state of persecution. Now is the time that the kingdom of heaven should show itself, not in speech but in power. The Scripture abounds with glorious promises which are to support us in the present tribulation. Take courage. He, who cannot lie, hath declared that the very hairs of our heads are numbered. And though our enemies may call these holy martyrs Hussites, Wickliffites, and Lutherans, and boast of their bloody deeds, we are not to stand amazed, but to grow stronger in the faith. It cannot be, but the cross of Christ must have its bitter enemies, and impious calumniators. The Judge however is at the door, and will soon pronounce a very different sentence *.

These fragments of the history of Luther are scarcely known; but they are inestimable, as it is from them that the most decisive arguments are to be drawn of the real spirit of the great Reformer and his disciples. His heart seems to have bounded with joy whenever his Lord and Master was duly honoured by the display of a right Christian temper in the midst of tribulations. The perusal of documents of this kind is highly gratifying; but the reader must often be content with short extracts, and such comprehensive translations as convey the substance of the materials in a little room.

A. D. 1524. Luther's letter to Lambert Thorn.

Early in the year 1524, Luther encouraged a faithful disciple of Christ †, at that time in bonds for the sake of the Gospel, with such suggestions as these: "My excellent brother, you stand in no need of my consolation: Jesus, who hath given you that sacred knowledge which the world knows nothing of, is glorified in your sufferings. Moreover, he strengthens you by his spirit, and comforts you by the two instances of true Christian resignation which lately took place at Brussels. Such examples, to which I add that of yourself, are both my comfort and my

* Luth. Ep. II. 150. † Lambert Thorn.

support; as they are the great glory of the Gospel of Christ. Who can tell why the Lord did not choose that you should die with Voes and Esch? You seem reserved for another miraculous exhibition. With my whole heart I congratulate you, and give thanks to our faithful Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, that he hath not only granted me to know his word and his spirit, but also to see in you such a rich and magnificent increase of his grace. Wretched me! —who am said to have first taught these things,— that I should be the last, and perhaps never thought worthy to partake of the bonds and flames of martyrs. But in this will I console myself; your bonds are mine; your prisons and flames are mine. Indeed they are so, while I preach and profess the same great truths, and thus sympathize and congratulate with you. Pray for me, my brother; I will pray for you. Keep your mind steady on the numerous promises of help, protection, and deliverances, which are made in Scripture to the faithful when in tribulation. Be strong in the Lord, and acquit yourself like a man. In HIM peace is promised to you; in the world you are to have tribulation. But be of good cheer," says he, "I have overcome the world. Never stop to dispute with Satan, but fix your eyes on the Lord Jesus; and in simple faith depending on him, be assured that it is by the blood of Christ alone that we shall be saved. All human performances can neither take away sin nor justify, because they are not the blood of Christ. We, under the government of the elector of Saxony, have peace; but the duke of Bavaria and the bishop of Treves persecute, proscribe, and put to death many. Some other bishops and princes threaten and use violence, but as yet have abstained from blood. Every where Jesus Christ 'is the reproach of men, and despised of the people *;' and you are one of his members, by the holy vocation of our Father; which vocation

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* Psalm 22.

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may he be pleased to complete in you, to the glory of his name and of his word! All our friends and our whole church of Wittemberg salute you, and recommend themselves to your prayers, more especially James Spreng and the brethren from Antwerp."

The same vigour of sentiment and true Christian fervour pervades many of the writings of Luther about this period.

"May the Lord who has called you to his work," says he to the afore-mentioned John Hesse of Breslaw *, "strengthen and perfect you! This is the consolation you must receive from me. For I scarcely comprehend what you can mean in requesting me to give you advice for your ministerial office. All I have to say on the subject is to be found in my publications. Then you have also St. Paul's directions to Timothy and Titus, as well as those of our Lord to all his apostles. What can you wish for more? You have entered the ship with Christ; what do you look for? Fine weather! Rather expect winds, and tempests, and waves to cover the vessel till she begin to sink. This is the baptism with which you must be first baptized, and then the calm will follow, upon your awakening Christ and imploring his help;—for sometimes he will appear to sleep for a season."

The beginnings of an evangelical revival in so important a kingdom as France deserve to be noticed. But as the Helvetic and Calvinistic denomination soon prevailed there above the Lutheran, our present narrative has no further concern with it, than to show the extensiveness of the Lutheran reformation, which doubtless had great influence in the production of Christian piety in that country.

In the city of Meux, Faber, Favel, and a few others, had begun to sow the seeds of pure Christianity, even during the year 1523; and they appear to have been favoured by their bishop, William

* Ante, p. 146.

Brissonet. But Francis I. king of France severely rebuked this prelate for having countenanced the novel teachers: upon which, William not only withdrew his protection from the reformers, but promised to banish them from the country. Faber fled to Nerac in Gascony, where he found support from Margaret the sister of the king, whose views of religion were extremely different from those of her brother Francis I. This persecuted heretic adhered steadily to the Lutheran system; but Favel, who found an asylum in Switzerland, immediately espoused the tenets of Zuingle, and afterwards assisted Calvin in his pastoral labours at Geneva. CENT. XVI.

The same city and year furnishes the memorable case of a mechanic named John Clark, who for fixing a paper on the door of the cathedral, in which he had written his sentiments against the pope's indulgences, and called him Antichrist, was scourged unmercifully, and burnt in the forehead with an ignominious mark. His mother no sooner saw him, than she bade him take courage, and exclaimed, "Live Jesus Christ, live the Cross!" And John, entirely regardless both of the pain he had endured, and the shame to which he was exposed, repaired to the city of Metz, where he spent his days in earning his subsistence at his trade, and his nights in teaching the doctrine of Luther. In the year following, his zeal led him to break to pieces some images which the superstitious inhabitants intended to worship the next day; and for this fault, his hand was first cut off, and his nose plucked from his face by a pair of hard-grasping pincers; then his breasts and his arms were by the same instrument torn to pieces and separated from his body. "Their idols," cried he, in the most excruciating torments, "are silver and gold, the work of men's hands!" Lastly, he was consumed by burning*. John Clark burnt. A. D. 1524.

As the terms Helvetic and Calvinistic denomina-

* Scultet. 178, & 192. Varillas & Seck. 282.

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tion have been mentioned, and as even at this day the meaning of the words Calvinist and Calvinistic supplies matter for much dispute and even contention among religious persons, it may not be improper briefly to advertise the reader, that in the origin of these denominations, as distinguished from the Lutheran, there really existed no material difference of sentiment; at least this is true so far as the religious practice of fallen creatures, and their recovery of the lost image of God in this world, and their eternal salvation in the next, depend upon a just application of the salutary remedies of the Gospel. It is one of the most mournful events attending the Reformation, that historical truth and method should require us to mention at all the difference here alluded to. Such as it was, it had, as yet, hardly appeared with perspicuity; but in the year 1524, and the several succeeding years, it grew into a tedious and violent controversy concerning the manner in which the body and blood of Christ are present in the Eucharist. This dispute, which has been called the Sacramental contest, after producing the most deplorable animosities, terminated at length in the fatal division of those sincere friends of reformation, who had embarked in the same cause, and who equally professed the essentials of godliness. The differences of sentiment among the contending parties were frequently indistinct, and almost entirely verbal; and if the Church of Christ could be viewed abstracted from every secular connection, such niceties would scarcely deserve a moment's consideration. But Christians must class themselves with some communities, and are therefore compelled to give peculiar attention to the distinguishing features of that denomination to which they belong. Happy! did they but learn to do this in a spirit of candour and charity!—And still happier! did they employ their zeal, their firmness, and their perseverance in defending the foundations of religion,—in imitation of

Rise of the Sacramental Controversy.

A. D. 1524.

St. Paul, who would not give place to false brethren by subjection, no not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with the Galatians*. CENT. XVI.

An example or two of the wisdom and diligence of the first reformers, in stating distinctly and guarding carefully the fundamental articles of the Gospel, will be more instructive, and more consistent with the plan of this history, than many pages filled with the relation of vexatious dispute and controversy.

I. John Brisman, a Franciscan doctor of divinity, preached, in 1523, at Cotbus in Lusatia, a sermon which has justly been called a very excellent compendium of true evangelical doctrine. It seems to have been composed in reply to the old calumny, which never fails to attend the profession of genuine Christianity,—that the doctrine of justification by faith alone, is destructive of good works.—The author, after having established that first great point concerning the justification of a sinner, proceeds thus: "Next to faith, it is my constant practice to inculcate the necessity of that love to our neighbour, which arises from faith, as fruit does from the tree. It is indeed impossible that there should exist a faith which is not productive of such a love. For as a lively faith produces a hearty love and confidence toward God, so from the same causes arises love to our neighbour, insomuch that we would serve him in every possible way, even to the loss of life; for this is Christ's command; 'A new commandment I give unto you, that as I have loved you, ye also love one another.' Oh, what a noble mark of distinction hath our Lord directed us to acquire! 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.' It is a new commandment, which has nothing in it frightful or disquieting, but which points out what those who are new creatures in Christ Jesus, and are justified by faith without works, ought to do; namely, to love their neighbour J. Brisman. A. D. 1523.

* Chap. ii.

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from their very inmost soul, and without any compulsion from penal laws.

"For these reasons I treat of faith and charity as the two leading points, and inseparably connected together. In fact, they cannot be disjoined; nor is it possible that real faith should not continually operate to the honour and glory of God, and the good of our neighbour. For like as by faith you are introduced to Christ and become one with him, and through Christ have access to God, so ought you to come out of Christ through the love of your neighbour, and with the intention of benefiting him to the utmost of your powers and opportunities, as Christ himself for your good hath not spared himself. Agreeably to this he says in John x. 9: 'I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.'"

For propagating such evangelical doctrine as this, Brisman was banished from his own country, but was soon called, by Divine Providence, to assist in spreading the glad tidings of salvation in Prussia. In the autumn of the same year this pious divine preached the first evangelical sermon that had been heard at Koningsberg*; and afterwards laboured in that part of the country for many years, to the great advantage of Christian truth and liberty†. In the discourse from which the above extract is taken, he owns, that during twelve years he had been immersed in the disputes of the scholastic theology, and constantly shown himself a violent enemy of the Gospel, till it pleased God in his compassion to take pity on his condition, and deliver him from the filth of the prevailing sophistry‡.

Luther's letter to the duke of Savoy.

II. Luther had been informed by a French gentleman of great zeal in the cause of true religion, that Charles duke of Savoy was very favourably inclined to the ecclesiastical reformation. Such an oppor-

* Chron. Hen. in Scult. 145. † Chytr. 290 & 291.
‡ Seck. 272.

tunity was not to be lost; and accordingly he wrote to the duke a congratulatory letter, which is now a peculiarly valuable document, as it clearly manifests the spirit of the great reformer, and the objects which he and his associates had in view. CENT. XVI.

He begins in the apostolic style: "Grace and peace in Christ Jesus our Lord, Amen. Your highness will pardon this liberty which the glorious cause of the Gospel induces me to take. Having heard that the duke of Savoy, through that gift of God which is certainly very rare among princes, is ardently desirous of promoting genuine piety, I have judged it to be my duty, however unworthy, at least to congratulate such a prince, and to do my utmost to encourage and animate him in the good cause. It is my prayer that this fine example of your majesty may be the means of winning many souls to Christ. And that you may not be deceived respecting our sentiments by the malignant misrepresentations of the papal advocate, I will put down some of the leading articles of our faith.

"1. Our first article is, that the origin, and indeed the whole efficacy of our salvation, are through faith in Christ alone, who does not blot out our sins on account of our works, but destroys the power of death, and, as the prophet says, leads captivity captive. So St. Paul, 'If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.' And again, 'We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law.'

"Now this faith we affirm is the gift of God; and moreover, that it is produced in the heart by the spirit of God. Faith is a thing that is alive, and makes a change in the whole man; and this without any antecedent merit, by the word of God alone. Thus in Romans; 'Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.'

"From this article it follows, that every thing which the popes and the schools have disseminated

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throughout the whole world, concerning satisfactions and works of merit and congruity, is most abominable doctrine; and all the ecclesiastical orders of the monasteries are precisely those bodies of men of whom Christ predicted, 'Many will come in my name, saying, Lo here, and lo there is Christ.' For if sin can be done away, and pardon obtained by our works, then it is not by the blood of Christ: and if it is by the blood of Christ, then it is not by our works. What shall we say then of all this mighty papistical zeal for works, but that it makes void the grace of God; especially as these men do not work purely for the sake of doing good, but that they may thereby obtain life everlasting; which can only be obtained by the blood of Christ. To trust in our own works, and to seek salvation by them, is in fact to deny the Lord that bought us.

"2. In our second article we maintain, that those who are justified by faith, incorporated into the society of Christ, and whose sins and sinful nature are subdued by him, must take care to bring forth good fruit in the course of their lives. Not that these fruits will make men good, or procure them remission of sins,—that is to be done by faith only; but in the same manner as the tree is known by its fruits, so is the soundness of the Christian to be proved by his works. The tree is not made good by its fruits, but is assuredly good if it produces valuable fruit; and in this way we argue with St. Paul respecting faith; namely, we demonstrate that our faith worketh by love, when we prove by the good which we do to our neighbour, that we cannot possibly stand in need of good works as the ground of our justification, because we have already in our hearts, by faith, the very principle upon which justification depends. The works then which we inculcate, are such as are serviceable to mankind, and by no means such as are done in the intention of purchasing heaven for ourselves. This last is a ruinous idea belonging to the

papal system, and is diametrically opposite to pure Christian charity." CENT. XVI.

"The world," continues Luther, "has been miserably seduced by popes, councils, and decrees of fathers, miserably entangled by the traditions of men, or rather by the snares of the devil, insomuch that there has been a general persuasion that the salvation of men's souls depended upon the observance of human ordinances. And thus by artful inventions and management, Jesus Christ and his Gospel, as well as faith, and charity, and real good works, and Christian liberty, have been kept out of sight. In the same way, the prize of salvation itself has been taken away from us, and we are compelled to run in vain."

The author afterwards, in his usual emphatical language, lays open a variety of papal abuses, and then concludes this admirable letter in the following strain:

"These, my illustrious prince, are the chief doctrines which I would wish you most strenuously to patronize in public, as indeed you have already begun to do. But let there be no compulsion: let there be no recourse to the sword: in that way nothing will prosper. All I request is, that under the government of your majesty, those who sincerely preach the Gospel may be protected and known to be in no danger. This is the way in which Christ will destroy Antichrist by the breath of his mouth; and thus, as it is in Daniel, he shall be broken without hand*; he whose coming is with lying wonders†. Satan will not cast out Satan. Devils must be cast out by the finger of God. Go on, my brave prince; and from the spark which already burns within you, kindle a holy Gospel flame, which, issuing from the house of Savoy, may spread throughout all France. May the Lord Jesus Christ pour his Spirit into your heart, that you may do every thing to the glory of his sacred WORD‡!"

* Dan. viii. 25. † 2 Thes. ii. 9. ‡ Ep. II. 156.

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FROM LUTHER'S LETTER TO THE DUKE OF SAVOY, TO THE PERSECUTIONS IN 1523 AND 1524.

NEW POPE, CLEMENT VII.
ANOTHER DIET AT NUREMBERG.
RECESS OF THE DIET.
CONFEDERACY AT RATISBON.
REFORMATION IN PRUSSIA.
PERSECUTIONS IN 1523 AND 1524.

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New Pope; Clement VII.

IN November 1523, Julius de Medicis, who had failed of success at the preceding election of Adrian, was placed in the papal chair by very uncanonical means; and this circumstance, besides the aversion which popes usually have for councils, made him dread the scrutiny of an assembly, which might terminate in the annihilation of his authority. He determined therefore to elude the demands of the Germans by every possible means. He was himself much superior to Adrian in the arts of government; and moreover, to effect his purposes the better, he made choice of cardinal Campeggio, an able and artful negotiator, as his nuncio to the diet of the empire assembled again at Nuremberg in the latter part of 1523.

Another Diet at Nuremberg.

The emperor was hindered by other concerns from being present at this diet. The elector Frederic appeared early in the sittings, but, on account of his infirmities, and also the violence, confusion, and turbulence of the proceedings, left Nuremberg before

any material business was concluded, and even before the arrival of the pope's legate. CENT. XVI.

The arrival of Campeggio was announced about the beginning of March 1524, when the princes, after mature deliberation, advised him by no means to enter Nuremberg with the accustomed pomp and ceremony, nor to bestow upon the inhabitants of the city his benedictions as he passed along; for lately, in going through Augsburg, the people had treated his dignity and his spiritual favours with the utmost irreverence, and had pointed at the mule on which he rode in so ridiculous and insulting a manner, that even his own retinue could not abstain from laughter. The emperor's brother Ferdinand, on the arrival of the legate, reproached the senate of Nuremberg for their attachment to Lutheranism, and exhorted them to adhere to the ancient religious system: but they replied with firmness that they must not desert the truth. One of the preachers was bold enough to affirm publicly in his sermon, that Antichrist entered Rome on the very day that the emperor Constantine left it;—an assertion which gave great offence to the legate, who however declared that he was more anxious on account of the Italians than the Germans. The latter, he said, were fickle in their dispositions, and would as easily lay aside novel doctrines as they were apt to imbibe them hastily: but not so the Italians, who usually adhered with obstinacy to what they had once received. It caused him therefore much painful anxiety to hear that Luther's publications were then read at Venice by great numbers. Arrival of the Pope's nuncio. A. D. 1524.

From these incidents we may infer the actual progress of Lutheranism, much better than from numerous assertions and conjectures of historians, which, however elegantly expressed, are often by no means the result of a patient examination of authentic documents, but rather have their origin in party spirit or a lively imagination.

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The reception of Campeggio at Nuremberg was not calculated to put a cardinal legate of the pope into good humour. The elector palatine, under the pretence of being let blood that day, was not present among the princes who went to meet him; and the representative of his holiness was conducted to his lodging in the habit of a traveller, by a different road from what had been usual.

The new pontiff however had been nowise deficient in paying due attentions to conciliate the German diet. Already he had dispatched his trusty chamberlain, Jerome Rorarius, to announce his election to the popedom, and to signify his intention of sending to them soon after a dignified apostolic nuncio with full credentials. Rorarius was commissioned to deliver from the pope to the elector Frederic a letter full of complimentary expressions, in which not so much as the name of Luther was mentioned; the prince was only exhorted to preserve the honour of his illustrious family, which had supplied the church with so many sovereign pontiffs, and Germany also with so many emperors, faithful to the Roman See. Campeggio also brought another letter from the pope of like import, in which he earnestly entreated the elector to confer with his legate for the public good. "The cardinal," said he, "is a man of uncommon virtue and discretion, and the case is urgent beyond example. If you have any gratitude to God, any regard for your own salvation or that of your country, use all your powers to compose the disturbances in Germany, and especially to restore the degraded dignities there to their former situation. Apply yourself with vigour to this most sacred work, and we promise to be ever mindful of your great merits in this very important concern*."

Frederic the WISE was not to be imposed on by

* Both these letters of Julius de Medicis were signed Clement VII. the name which he assumed upon being declared pope.

such language as this. Before he withdrew from Nuremberg, it is plain he had penetrated the designs of the pope and his advocates; because he left it in strict charge with his representative Feilitch, not only to have no conferences with Campeggio, but also to protest against any concessions which might be made by others to that artful legate*. Moreover, this good prince probably concluded that, in the existing circumstances, more advantages would accrue to the cause of Christianity from his absence than his presence†. CENT. XVI.

Campeggio himself, there is no doubt, considered the departure of Frederic as an event most unfavourable to the object of his negotiations with the diet. In a letter to the prince he thus expresses his disappointment: "I have been much vexed and mortified to find your highness unexpectedly gone. My master's letters to you are concise; but he has directed me to communicate in his name a great deal of matter, which had it been of such a nature as to admit either of delay, or of effectual discussion by letter, this my laborious and troublesome journey had better have been spared."

"There are frequent reports that your highness appears to favour the novel heresies of the present times; but neither the pope nor myself can give the least credit to them. As for my part, on the very day when I was first introduced into your highness's presence, I was particularly struck, among your many excellent and princely endowments, with one which sparkled like a star of extraordinary brightness and magnitude; I mean, your extreme regard for Christian piety, and your affection toward the Apostolic See. The impression then made on my mind

* Comm. de Luth. 289.

† The adversaries of the Reformation, well aware of the weight which the name of the elector of Saxony would give to any measure, forged his signature in the register of the RECESSES, in spite of the protest of Feilitch.—Weimar Arch.

CHAP. X. was such as absolutely forbids me to entertain the smallest suspicion of the soundness of the religious principles of your highness,—whatever may be said to the contrary.

"The scandalous and impious innovations which I have observed in some parts of Germany, by no means affect my opinion of the princes, and persons of distinction.

"It is however notorious that the influence of your highness is great and extensive; and therefore his holiness conjures you to imitate the zeal and virtue of your ancestors in the present conjuncture. He calls upon you to exert yourself with a becoming religious spirit, and to restrain and punish the refractory and seditious. Many parts of your dominions are said to require speedy animadversions of this kind. The disease is spreading apace, and taking deep root. If the common people are permitted to take into their own hands the management of religion, what are the magistrates, what are sovereigns to expect, who, as such, are already very much the objects of their aversion? Let those who are so mightily pleased with these rebellions against the church and its rulers, consider where these impieties and distractions are likely to terminate.

"The supreme pontiff, like a provident pilot, foresees the storm, and by me admonishes the German princes of their imminent danger, and would gladly animate them to restrain the madness of the populace. This is not the cause of the Roman See, it is your own, it is the cause of all Germany, and of Christendom. I can have no wish but to promote the peace of the country, the glory of its governors, and the dignity of the church: and for the attainment of these objects, I would raise up the fallen, direct the mistaken into the right way, and retain the penitent in the bosom of Christian charity. I have no doubt of your highness's attachment to the Apostolic See; nevertheless, feeling myself unequal to the

task I have undertaken, I most ardently entreat you, CENT. XVI. to favour the purpose of my negotiations, and to inform me in writing what you think best to be done."

A man who could write such a letter as this, was well qualified to execute the private instructions of Clement VII. in the present juncture. What those instructions were, we learn from the grand papal advocate himself*. 1. They breathed nothing but severity and violence against Luther. The legate was directed to use his utmost endeavours to procure the execution of the edict of Worms: And, 2. He was to counteract every measure which tended to the appointment of a general council, and the redress of the Centum gravamina. This pope, even in Adrian's time, used to say, that councils were good when the subjects of which they treated were any thing but the pope's authority†. Agreeably to his maxims, Clement instructed his legate to PRETEND, that, in consequence of the decease of the late pope, and the sudden departure of his nuncio from Nuremberg‡, the catalogue of the German grievances had never been regularly received at Rome; and thus to decline making any definitive answer to such indecent and unreasonable demands.

Campeggio, both before and during his conferences with the diet, laboured incessantly IN PRIVATE, with the members of that assembly, to effectuate the purposes of his commission. In the public meetings he harangued in a most plausible strain concerning the paternal compassion of the pope for the present situation of the country, and his own inclinations to peace and moderation; at the same time he expressed astonishment that so many great princes could tolerate the late mischievous innovations in religion, and the abolition of those rites and ceremonies in which themselves and their ancestors had been educated.

* Pallav. II. 10. † Paul Sarpi. ‡ Page 111.

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The diet, after listening to a number of unmeaning promises and declarations, desired to know the pope's intentions respecting the methods which in the preceding year they had proposed to Cheregato for restoring the peace of the church; and also, whether the legate was charged with any satisfactory answer to the MEMORIAL of grievances which they had sent to Rome?

Campeggio replied, that he knew of no plan devised by them for composing the religious differences, except the edict of Worms. That edict, though approved by the emperor and sanctioned by the general consent, had not been obeyed; and the execution of it ought, in his judgment, to be the first object of their deliberations. As to the memorial of grievances, he allowed that three copies of it had found their way to private persons, and that one of them had fallen into his own hands; but that the pope and cardinals considered it as the production of a private person, and by no means of the German princes. He had no instructions about it. There were articles in it which even bordered upon heresy; and the publication of them was highly disrespectful to the Roman See.

Charles V. was at this time very solicitous to gain the pope to his interests; and therefore both his own ambassador and his brother Ferdinand warmly seconded Campeggio in his complaints against the German princes for their lenity towards the disciples of Luther. Yet such was the complexion of this diet in general, that their RECESS * was in fact as favourable to the Reformation as the former. They promised to observe the edict of Worms AS FAR AS THEY COULD, renewed their demands of a general council, and appointed the eleventh of November next for a new assembly of the states of the empire, who should meet at Spires, and make temporary regulations of all matters in dispute, until the council could be summoned. The words, AS FAR AS THEY COULD,

Recess of the Diet.

* Ap. 18. 1524. Goldast. ii. 152.

were highly displeasing to the papal party. "They were inserted," says Maimbourg, "that men might be at full liberty to do nothing in obedience to the edict of Worms, and so it actually turned out." CENT. XVI.

The proceedings of this diet were attended with many disputes and dissatisfactions. Ferdinand, with the consent of the pope, insisted on one-third of the annual income of the bishops in support of the war against the Turks; but several of them, who had possessions in Austria, protested against so enormous a contribution. The bishop of Gurk declared that the extirpation of the Lutherans was become more necessary than that of the Turks; and that he would contribute more cheerfully to effectuate the former than the latter. Ferdinand reminded the bishops, that the success of either would prove fatal both to the ecclesiastical dignities and revenues. There was much contest in the diet respecting the terms in which the decree should be expressed; but though the majority of votes were against the execution of the edict of Worms, yet such were the clamours of the prelates, and the menaces of the emperor's ambassador, that they carried along with them the princes, and prevailed by authority where they had failed in numbers. The lower orders and states of the empire protested publicly against these irregularities; which were likewise withstood with great spirit by the envoy of the elector of Saxony, who was instructed to complain—that the edict of Worms was obtained by a manœuvre of the bishops against the sense of the diet, and that it had never yet been communicated to himself and his brother John; whereas that important resolution at Nuremberg, which enjoined the preaching of the gospel in its purity, was the result of the most mature deliberation, and had been published every where. "His master," he said, "could not approve of the present silence in regard to two points on which the former diet had distinctly explained themselves to Cheregato, namely, how dangerous it

CHAP. X. would be to the public peace to attempt to execute by force the edict of Worms, and how earnestly they wished for the free propagation of Christian truth."

Planitz, who represented the elector of Saxony in the council of regency, expressed the elector's sentiments on the subject of the war with the Turks in the following terms:—"My most kind master is of opinion that all our enterprizes will fail of success while we continue to be such characters as we now are: That, before all other things, we ought to beg for the grace of God and his divine help, that he would be pleased to bestow on us, miserable sinners, a sincere desire to promote, through a spirit of true Christian faith, HIS honour, and the salvation of our neighbour: that if we would fight the infidels with any prospect of a prosperous issue, we ought first to get the better of our own infidelity and want of dependence on God, also of our attachment to private interests, and our disposition to revenge, envy, and malice; and that then we might, with a good hope of victory, commit the contest to an overruling Providence."

A declaration of this sort was enough to bring upon a man the reproach of Lutheranism.

Never perhaps were the resolutions of any assembly received with less approbation than those of this diet of Nuremberg. The emperor, in letters to his brother Ferdinand and the princes, expressed the utmost indignation at what had passed. Yet conscious of his inability to enforce obedience to his commands, he sent all the letters to his brother, with secret instructions by no means to disperse them among those hard audacious German potentates, if he foresaw they were likely to treat them with contempt. Ferdinand, however, imprudently divulged the sentiments of the emperor, and thereby greatly weakened the sovereign authority. The independent spirit of the princes, not used to the imperious language of Charles V., began to mutiny against this

encroachment on their liberties: the greater part of Germany opposed insuperable obstacles to the execution of the edict of Worms; and nothing was gained to the papal party by this offensive activity of the emperor, except the prevention of the assembly of the States at Spires in the succeeding November. CENT. XVI.

In writing on this subject*, even to the venerable elector of Saxony, Charles could not abstain from intemperate and acrimonious language. It belonged to himself and the pope, he said, to call councils, and to fix on the place where they should meet. He absolutely forbad the princes to assemble at Spires, and enjoined the strictest observance to the edict of Worms. He called Luther a PROFANE SAVAGE, who, like Mahomet, was aiming at great power by poisoning men's minds with the contagion of his agreeable doctrines.

Frederic, by returning a modest and respectful answer, together with a copy of the protest made by his envoy, warded the violence of Charles, who must have found it difficult to blame this prince for protesting against a decree which he himself so much disapproved, though for very different reasons.

Effect of the Edict at Rome.

At Rome, the news of the edict of Nuremberg produced both alarm and astonishment. Clement VII. regarding the intended assembly at Spires as a new ecclesiastical tribunal erected in opposition to the legitimate authority of the pope, instantly summoned his cardinals to deliberate on the measures which should be judged most fit to prevent so dangerous an innovation. The conclave soon showed their capacity for the management of intrigues and secular politics. They directed Campeggio to collect together in Germany all the princes, bishops, and others who adhered to the cause of Rome; and to give them fair promises respecting a future council, but at the same time to represent to them the great difficulty of calling one in time of war †.

* From Bruges. Seck. 290. † Pallav.

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Their grievances, he might say, would be redressed at Rome; and he was to conjure them above all things to prevent, if possible, the discussion of any articles of religion in the assembly at Spires: and lastly, he would do well to endeavour, through the influence of the emperor, to retard the meeting of that assembly, or hinder it altogether if he could.

The pope, for the same purpose, resolved to apply to the kings of England and Portugal; and as the virtuous elector of Saxony was not to be gained either by Romish menace or Romish flattery, he appears to have meditated his degradation from the electoral dignity, by pronouncing him a heretic. This was the explicit advice of Alexander.

As no man that ever lived was a greater enemy than Martin Luther to sedition and riot, or contended more strenuously than he did for the duty of subjects to preserve the public peace, his friends at the diet of Nuremberg opposed with all their might the inserting of his name in the decree as one who had been the cause of tumults and disturbances on account of religion, and they carried their point; nevertheless, through the dishonest zeal of those who disliked Luther, his name, though not in the original decree, appeared in many of the copies of it which were dispersed throughout the German empire.

Luther himself was as little satisfied as the pope with the determinations of the diet; and his inimical historian * admits that he had very good reason for discontent. "For if the edict of Worms, which had pronounced him a heretic, was to be enforced, why had the diet directed the merits of his writings to be inquired into in the future assembly at Spires? Again, if an inquiry of this kind was in itself a proper measure, why was he to be condemned and punished previously to the trial which was to determine his guilt or innocence?"

Our undaunted Reformer had no sooner received

* Maimbourg.

a copy of the decree of the diet, then he caused it to be printed along with the edict of Worms, and added many vehement and severe observations of his own. He treated those who thought of executing the edict of Worms, as men who had lost their senses, and were as outrageous and absurd as the giants who made war against heaven. He exhorted his Christian countrymen to pray for the infatuated unhappy princes, and not to think of undertaking any expedition against the Turks. "The Turks," said he, "exceed our great men both in council and moderation. With us, you see, a poor fragile body*, already on the very borders of putridity, which can never be sure of living till the evening, boasting itself to be the true, the great defender of the catholic faith. No success is to be expected under the auspices of men who tempt God in this dreadful manner. I call upon you, my beloved princes and masters, in the name of that God who governs the world and judges your secret thoughts, to review and to amend your conduct. I have no doubt but some dreadful storm of the divine indignation threatens Germany, and will most assuredly burst upon you, if you thus continue to provoke Almighty God. These two decrees, promulged nearly at the same time, are impudent and disgraceful instances of fraud, falsehood, and contradiction. Alas! that princes of the Christian name should have recourse to such detestable measures! Unhappy Germans, who have endured for so many years the abominable haughty yoke of insulting pontiffs, and yet take no pains to shake it from your necks! What! after having been pillaged so often, and exhausted of the very marrow of your bones, will no prayers, admonitions, or remonstrances move you to take care of yourselves, but you must employ all your vengeance upon such a poor wretch as Luther! Go on, if it must be so: here am I; I shall not run away. I shall resign my

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* Meaning that of the emperor.

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life most willingly, and migrate to my eternal inheritance whenever it shall please God to pronounce my hour to be come. However, the same Omnipotent Being who, against hope, has preserved my life, during the space of almost three years, from the cruelty of my enemies, can still preserve it; though indeed I have no great desire to live.

"Through the divine goodness I am less alarmed at the thought of death than I used to be; but let those who would destroy me, reflect whether my blood may not leave a stain, which neither they nor their children shall be able to wash away. God will not be mocked; and ye know not but he may be pleased to ordain that the murder of Luther should be followed by the heaviest national calamities*."

In a letter to Spalatinus, then at the diet of Nuremberg, Luther writes thus: "I am not very anxious concerning this Imperial diet, for I am well aware of Satan's devices. May Christ preserve his church, and triumph over the enemy! Amen . . . . . I wish our simple princes and bishops would at length open their eyes, and see that the present revolution in religion is not brought about by Luther,—who is really nobody,—but by the omnipotence of Christ himself; and may they have grace afforded them to see also that they have hitherto done their utmost to oppose and resist HIS WILL†!"

In another letter, written to his friend N. Hausman after the elector had left the diet, he says, "Our prince is returned, and nothing as yet is decreed against me. But the Lord has been pleased to remove from this world, by means of a most lamentable apoplexy, the chancellor of Treves, who only two days before his death had boasted, in a convivial meeting, that before the feast of St. Martin

* Maimbourg observes, that Luther knew very well that the harsh expressions which he made use of in this publication, would be applied to his Roman-catholic adversaries EXCLUSIVELY.

† Ep. II. 183.

the sword would put an end to all this business of reformation in religion." CENT. XVI.

Cardinal Campeggio, for the purpose of eluding the remonstrances of the Germans and their demands of redress of grievances, brought forward, during the conferences at Nuremberg, certain constitutions for the amendment of some disorders and abuses which prevailed among the inferior clergy; but they were rejected by the diet, as tending on the whole to effect no substantial reform, and rather to increase the ecclesiastical dominion, and pave the way for greater extortions of money. This active legate, however, did not abandon the cause he had to support. Having failed to influence the votes of the diet as he had hoped, his next object was to secure, if possible, a determined confederacy of the friends of the pope. With this view he collected together, in July 1524, at Ratisbon, the emperor's brother Ferdinand and the two dukes of Bavaria, the archbishop of Saltzburg, and several other prelates or their representatives. These, at the instance of the cardinal, bound themselves by a new declaration to execute rigorously the edict of Worms against Luther and his followers; to adhere to the ancient usages in administering the sacraments; to punish the apostate monks and married priests; to recall from Wittemberg, under heavy penalties for disobedience, all such students as were their own subjects; and lastly, among other resolutions, they determined to afford no asylum to banished Lutherans; and in case of rebellion, to protect and assist one another with all their force. At the same time the confederates agreed to receive and publish the legate's constitutions before mentioned for the reformation of the clergy. They consisted of thirty-five articles, two of which were levelled against clergymen who should use enchantments and divinations. This partial

Confederacy at Ratisbon. A. D. 1524.

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reform was intended to amuse and sooth the people, but produced little effect. The Germans were oppressed, and could be satisfied only by the removal of their burdens.

The confederacy at Ratisbon, considered as a political manœuvre of the papal government, was managed by Campeggio, no doubt, with much ability and address. It was, however, an event of which neither that artful legate, nor his more artful master in the Romish conclave, seems to have foreseen the consequences. In fact, while they were flattering themselves with having cemented a league of the most powerful supporters of the ancient ecclesiastical system, they forgot that they were giving the signal for an avowed and permanent disunion among the various potentates and orders of Germany. The seceders comprehended but a small part of the Imperial states; and their proceedings were altogether irregular. The few had not only unjustly assumed the right of making general orders for the many, but had neglected matters of the greatest importance to the community: they had done nothing to remove the real and principal grievances so long complained of, neither had they applied to the lesser abuses their true remedies.

It was this view of the proceedings at Ratisbon which roused the much more numerous Imperial deputies who favoured Lutheranism, and who had dissented from Campeggio in the late diet, to form soon after a similar convention at Spires. There, in the same month of July, they assembled, and, in concert with one another, and in opposition to their papal adversaries, explained the decrees of Nuremberg in favour of growing Protestantism.

Convention at Spires.

The Ratisbon party, it is well known, were far from being influenced by what are sometimes called motives of pure and honest bigotry. For example, the dignity and authority of the popedom were mani-

festly at stake. The ambitious schemes of Charles V. required him to purchase the concurrence of the pope, as a temporal prince, at ANY PRICE. Ferdinand was then secretly using every art to secure his election as king of the Romans. The two dukes of Bavaria, who had hitherto permitted the public sale of Luther's books in their dominions, were now bribed to proscribe them, and to obstruct the further progress of his doctrine, by a subsidy from their higher clergy of one-fifth of all their revenues during the space of five years: and in return for this ample contribution, the rich ecclesiastical dignitaries were further gratified by not only being allowed to escape all reformation themselves, but also by the enacting of Campeggio's new and rigorous laws against the inferior parochial preachers,—a shameful partiality this, by which the domineering authority of the hierarchy was augmented, and the condition of the indigent laborious ministers was rendered more humiliating and dependant! CENT. XVI.

Though the motives which produced the opposite convention at Spires, it is to be feared, were in some instances not altogether Christian and disinterested, yet were they in general truly laudable and patriotic, and favourable to national liberty; and, in regard to many of the states of the empire, proceeded from a desire of establishing a pure and reformed religion.

This division of Germany into two parties, though it certainly weakened the force of the empire, and laid the foundation of many incurable suspicions and jealousies, was nevertheless, under Providence, extremely favourable to the progress of the Reformation. The same reflection is suggested by the history of the contentions between the emperor and the French king, which prevented that union of the Romish princes which was necessary to consolidate a system of universal persecution.

The pious and modest student of history often discovers such a comfortable and satisfactory evi-

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dence of a divine hand in the direction of human affairs, as entirely escapes both the profane sceptic and the conceited philosopher.

Luther had now reason to consider his personal security at Wittemberg as abundantly meliorated. Both the Roman pontiff and the emperor had made two vain attempts at Nuremberg to effectuate the execution of the edict of Worms. The evasive decree of the last diet, "that they would observe that edict, AS FAR AS THEY COULD*," was soon interpreted to mean THAT THEY COULD NOT; and this answer, in explicit terms, was returned to the archduke Ferdinand by the princes who favoured the Lutheran reformation, after that they had received the indignant letters of Charles V. †.

However, as our great Reformer never counted even his life dear to him, so that he might finish his course with joy and the ministry which he had received ‡, any satisfaction afforded to him from considerations of the safety of his person, was very little compared with that which he derived from hearing multiplied delightful accounts of the success of the Gospel in various parts, during the disputes and divisions in Germany.

A. D. 1524. The Landgrave of Hesse favours the Reformation.

It was about the middle of this same year that the Landgrave of Hesse began to profess a decided approbation of the reformed religion. Enlightened by Luther's writings, he enjoined his preachers, in a public proclamation, to confine themselves to the clear simple doctrine of our Saviour and his Apostles; upon which, a Franciscan monk, named Nicolaus Ferber, undertook to reclaim him to the catholic faith, by putting into his hands what he called an approved treatise on religion, and by exhorting him to imitate the kings and princes in Italy, France, and Spain,

* Maimb. in Seck. p. 287. See also page 166 of this volume.
† Page 168. ‡ Acts xx.

who had agreed to inflict exemplary punishment on the Lutherans. The Landgrave replied, That he had read the book, but found little in it that accorded with the charitable spirit of a true Christian; That he had no design to leave ancient customs which were founded in Scripture; That he could not agree with the monk in denying the doctrine of justification by faith alone, because the words of Scripture were express on that head; Moreover, that he highly disapproved of his representing the Virgin Mary as a Mediator between God and man, and the Gospel as a thing that ought not to be preached to the common people; both which points, he said, were directly contrary to the written word. CENT. XVI.

Albert, Marquis of Brandenburg, brother of the Marquis George, whom we have before mentioned * as a zealous promoter of the Reformation in Silesia, was at the late diet of Nuremberg, where, in the right of Grand-master of the Teutonic Order, he ranked next to the German archbishops.—Political emergencies were the immediate cause of his presence. During his stay, however, he took the advantage of often hearing Osiander † preach; and as he had already conversed with Luther, and read his books with attention, he now became an open and avowed defender of the Reformation; more especially after Luther in an elaborate epistle had resolved certain doubts which the marquis had proposed to him respecting the pontifical jurisdiction. Prussia soon felt the happiest effects from the operation of Albert's religious sentiments. Long ago the pagans of that country had been compelled by the sanguinary Teutonic knights to become at least NOMINAL Christians, but, under the protection and encouragement of Albert, a SUBSTANTIAL change, both in doctrine and practice, commenced among them, and gained ground with vast rapidity. Lutheran divines laboured in the Prussian territories with great Also Albert the Marquis of Brandenburg.

* Page 143. † See Appendix, Osiander.

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success; and George de Polentz, bishop of Samland, so much distinguished himself by his evangelical exertions, that he may truly be called the father of the Reformation in that country. George seems to have been the first prelate who ventured to recommend to his clergy the study of Luther's writings. "Read," says he, "with a pious and diligent spirit, the translation of the Old and New Testament by that most famous divine Dr. Martin Luther. Read his tracts on Christian liberty, and on good works, also his explanations of the Epistles and Gospels, and of the Magnificat and the Psalms."

In the same public advice to his clergy, he laments the excessive ignorance of the people, that many were grown old and decrepit, who knew not a particle of their baptismal obligations, nor any thing of Christianity in general, beyond the mere name. He then exhorts them to perform the baptismal service no longer in Latin, but in the language of the country: "It was the will of God that the promises of the Gospel should be explained in intelligible language."

Maurice, bishop of Ermland, a province of Prussia, published in the same month a most violent and abusive declamation against Luther and his disciples. With the most horrid imprecations he devotes to the divine vengeance all those, who shall continue to divide the church of Christ by adhering to what he calls the cause of those pernicious schismatics.

During this turbulent season, and amidst many private afflictions, Luther appears to have stood constantly at the helm of the infant-protestant churches, and to have directed their course with a most watchful eye. In 1523, he sent into Prussia the excellent Brisman afore-mentioned*; and also, in less than a year after, Paul Sperat, who for preaching the Gospel in Moravia had been condemned to a noisome dungeon at Olmutz, by the persecuting bishop of

Brisman sent into Prussia. A. D. 1523.

* Page 155.

that city. Paul providentially escaped, and came to Wittemberg,—his evangelical zeal not the least impaired. Recommended by Luther to Albert and Brisman, he repaired to Prussia, was made bishop of Pomesane, and continued a zealous labourer in the vineyard of Christ for about twenty-six years. John Poliander, who had been the amanuensis of Eckius in the disputation at Leipsic, became an useful coadjutor of Brisman and Sperat; and it was through the instructions of these three evangelical instruments of the Divine will, that the good bishop of Samland was enabled to effect so wonderful a change in religion in a very short time. Luther, in his letters, speaks of the Reformation in Prussia with a sort of triumphant satisfaction and delight. "At length," says he to Spalatinus, "one bishop is come forward, and, with a single eye, given himself up to the cause of Christ and his Gospel in Prussia. I mean the bishop of Samland, who listens to the fostering instruction of Brisman, whom we sent there after that he had cast off the monkish habit. The kingdom of Satan declines fast in that country." CENT. XVI.

Luther writes to the Bishop of Samland. A. D. 1525.

It would lengthen our narrative too much to give the whole of an excellent letter, which Luther wrote in the following year to the bishop of Samland himself. A summary of it cannot fail to be both pleasant and instructive. After addressing this prelate as his most reverend father, and respected master in Christ, he proceeds to say:

"At the request of my brethren, I have determined to publish my familiar exposition of the book of Deuteronomy, and to dedicate it to you as a dignified ecclesiastic. The majestic authority indeed of Moses might well have deterred me or any one from such an undertaking,—agreeably to that divine declaration, 'Unto the ungodly, said God, Why dost thou preach my laws, whereas thou hatest to be reformed *?'—but that the circumstances of the times, and

* Psalm l. 16, 17.

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the salvation of men's souls require every effort to be made which may promote religious instruction. My feeble attempts to explain the most excellent of the sacred writers cannot be worthy the notice of so great a personage; nevertheless they afford me an opportunity, which I gladly embrace, of publicly testifying my affectionate regard for you, on account of your sincere faith in Christ, and your labour of love toward his disciples. Thus we think, that if it do but please God, by your new and extraordinary example, to inflame the minds of some other princes and prelates with the same holy zeal, they would soon spread the pure word of God, and make the true church rejoice in a most astonishing manner. We do not flatter you, when we speak highly of the divine gifts bestowed upon you; no, we only extol the miraculous grace of God, and rejoice to hear that it reigns triumphant in your soul. In fact, from among all the bishops of the world, God hath selected you alone, and delivered you out of the jaws of Satan, which have opened wide as hell, and are devouring all around. As to other bishops, I say,—though I hope there may be some Nicodemus's,—we can discover nothing but an insane outrageous conspiracy with kings and princes, against the rising light of the Gospel; and thus do they fulfil the second Psalm, 'The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his Anointed.' Truly wonderful is the grace of God in your case; so that you not only receive and believe in the WORD, but publicly confess it, and teach it with episcopal authority throughout your diocese, and also defend and liberally provide for those who labour in the same; and all this to the great grief and mortification of the enemies of the Gospel. These are things not to be passed by in silence, but made as public as possible, to the glory of God, the furtherance of the doctrine of Christ, the increase of faith, the comfort of the weak and the

persecuted, and, lastly, to the terror and disgrace of the adversaries, and of those tyrannical idols, who sit in the pontifical chair, and do no good to the miserable people. Neither am I to be deterred from making this public declaration through any apprehension lest I should thereby excite against you the odium of priests, kings, and princes, or even bring your life into danger. It is very true, indeed, that at this day a man can commit no crime which is deemed so flagitious a sacrilege as to confess the Gospel of God. Several have already shed their blood in this cause, with the greatest constancy. Neither can we foresee what trials await us. If, however, we shall be thought worthy to suffer, we must patiently submit to every disgrace for the name of the Lord: and I am most assuredly persuaded, that he who has already honoured you with the Word of his cross, will strengthen you in the spirit of the same, and, through your sufferings in the flesh, will ultimately cause you to triumph over the blasphemous opposition of the great and powerful in this world, and also over the violent attacks of Satan and his whole kingdom. CENT. XVI.

"Moreover, that the Divine beneficence might appear the more conspicuous and abundant, your country is blessed with a truly Christian governor, viz. the famous Albert, marquis of Brandenburg, whom God, by his spirit, is pleased so to influence, that he does his utmost to promote the Gospel, and in all things judges and determines as becomes a good prince. And thus, by the united efforts and support of the prince and the bishop, and through the wonderful and inexpressible goodness of God, the pure Gospel moves in full sail through Prussia, where it was neither sought nor called for: and on the contrary, in Germany, where it has been pressed on the inhabitants with much zealous invitation and intreaty, it is by them repelled and blasphemed with the most outrageous insanity. Here again is fulfilled, 'I was

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found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest to them that asked not after me: But to Israel he saith, 'All day long I have stretched out my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.'

"Be pleased, then, good bishop, to accept this little comment on the book of Deuteronomy, with this declaration of your own character prefixed to it. May it prove an occasion to you of glorifying your Redeemer! and may it, through your patronage, prove useful to those who perhaps may not have seen so much into the meaning of this book of Moses as it has pleased God to give me to see! For there are many characters, and those teachers too, who are much disposed to set aside Moses, and indeed all the Old Testament, and affect to be content with the Gospels; but I am convinced this is far from a right Christian way of thinking: for as learned men call Homer the father of the poets, and the fountain of eloquence and erudition, so Moses is the father of all the prophets, and the true source of heavenly wisdom and heavenly language. It is a very pleasant employment, and it is moreover very improving both to the understanding and the memory, to trace in Moses the vestiges of the later prophets, and to observe how they read his writings, how they learnt them, how they taught them, how they studied them day and night; in a word, how from his fulness they all collected their riches! He himself seems to have foreseen and predicted this, when he says, 'My doctrine shall drop as the rain; my speech shall distil as the dew*.'

"In explaining this book of Moses, I have aimed at simplicity throughout, and have avoided mystical expositions. Piety and faith are the first points with Moses; and these he teaches at considerable length. He then passes on to the regulation of civil polity, and the preservation of mutual charity; and here you find nothing that is not directly to the purpose, and in the strictest sense useful and necessary. Even

* Deut. xxxii. 2.

in regard to the ceremonies, peculiar care is constantly taken to render them grave and interesting, through the divine injunctions accompanying them, which give to them a weight and a substance. It is the want of these injunctions that renders the popish ceremonial devices so trifling and ridiculous. CENT. XVI.

"Toward the end of each chapter I have generally subjoined a short allegory; not that I have any great liking for such things, but rather for the purpose of improving the bad taste of some persons in the management of allegories. Jerome and Origen did not succeed in this part of their writings, because they had only mere morals in view, whereas the great stress should always be laid on the operation of FAITH and the WRITTEN WORD. I have therefore endeavoured to show, that, in the use of allegories, the progress of the Gospel should always be the principal object. All the figures and types to be found in the writings of Moses have this tendency. May our Lord, who has begun his own good work in your soul, and without whose operation nothing can be done, preserve you, and increase your usefulness! May you in this life become a prelate truly powerful in the word of God! And when the Prince of prelates shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. To HIS protection, I beg you to recommend me with your holy prayers*.

"MARTIN LUTHER."

Persecutions.

What a contrast is the conduct of Luther to that of his papal antagonist Campeggio! The decision of this legate, while he remained at Nuremberg, upon a case which was brought before him from Strasburg, deserves to be recorded, as it demonstrates at once the licentiousness of the Romish clergy of those times, as well as the corrupt maxims which influenced the ecclesiastical judges.—The unscrip-

* Ep. II. 285.

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tural doctrine of the celibacy of the clergy was giving way in various places to the enlightened principles of the reformers; and accordingly at Strasburg it happened that several of the sacerdotal order had lately married wives, and had thereby exposed themselves to the censures of their indignant superiors in the Church. The bishop of that city had issued his citation to the culprits, by which they were summoned to appear before him at Saverne, and to hear his sentence against them for having contracted matrimony, not only in defiance of the laws of the Church, holy fathers, popes, and the emperor, but also in traitorous disobedience to the Divine Majesty and their own sacred order. Upon the receipt of the bishop's citation, the married clergy intreated the senate of Strasburg to interfere on their behalf, and to procure them a fair hearing. They were willing, they said, even to suffer death, if they should be found to have broken the commands of God in this matter. The senate complied with the request of the clergy; and informed the bishop, that the accused did by no means decline an equitable inquiry into their conduct, but that any attempt to punish them in the summary way now proposed, could not be carried into execution without the utmost danger of a tumult, especially as many others of the clergy were known to live openly with harlots, and yet had incurred no ecclesiastical censures. It was in this state of the contest that the bishop complained to the legate of being hindered by the senate of Strasburg from exercising his just authority, in punishing those clergy who, in contempt of the sacred laws, had lately become husbands. The deputies of the city replied, that it was not the senate but the bishop himself that obstructed the course of justice, in not adhering to the compact made with them; namely, that all causes of this sort should be heard by his official in the CITY, and that sentence should not be pronounced against a clergyman in a private way,

at a distance from Strasburg, and without examination into the merits of the case. The deputies concluded with warning the legate, as they had before warned the bishop, of the imminent danger or rather certainty there would be of tumults among the populace, if the senate, to whose justice the married clergy had appealed, should permit them to be delivered up to punishment, without previous benefit of trial. The legate however declared, that the bishop had not exceeded his authority, and that the senate ought to assist him in carrying his sentence into execution: upon which a warm and memorable altercation ensued between Campeggio and the Strasburg deputies. "A great part of the Strasburg clergy," said the latter, "cohabit with harlots in their own houses in the most shameful manner. In so doing, they give great offence to the people, and also set the very worst examples; yet they proceed in this manner with the most entire impunity. There is not a single instance of any one of them being punished by the bishop on this account. If therefore the senate should enforce severe sentences against those who have only broken certain regulations of the popes, and at the same time should take no notice of others who have, by many shameful practices, and particularly by their habitual intercourse with strumpets, violated the precepts of God, who, continued the deputies, can answer for the safety of such partial magistrates?"—To this very just representation Campeggio only replied, that the guilt of the married clergy was beyond dispute, and that their crimes were not the less because others did wrong; neither was the bishop who connived at the irregularities of the clergy to be defended. He admitted that it was an usual thing for the German bishops to receive money from the ecclesiastics of their dioceses as the price of being allowed to keep harlots, and they would, he said, at some time be called to an account for this practice; but it did not

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thence follow that it was lawful for a priest to marry. Nay, it was a much greater fault in a priest to become a husband of a woman, than to keep many concubines in his house: for the married priest defends his conduct as right, whereas the other, who lives with a concubine, knows and admits that he is doing wrong: moreover, continued the legate, it is not every one that has the gift of continency, like John the Baptist.—The deputies of the senate dryly answered this unexampled effrontery in the following manner: "When the bishop shall begin to punish the whoremongers, then the senate may be able to support him with more advantage in his lawful animadversions upon others*."

Such infatuated conduct of the Roman hierarchy could not fail to promote the progress of the Reformation. The senate of Strasburg soon after this transaction completed the Protestant system in that large and populous city, where Hedio, Bucer, Capito, and other godly pastors, were labouring with great success: and such was the reputation of the Strasburg theologians, that James Faber, who has been mentioned before, and Gerard Roussel, were sent privately from France by Margaret of Navarre, the sister of the French king, for the express purpose of conversing on the grand points of divinity with Bucer and Capito. The issue of the conference was, that these pious divines gave to one another the right hand of fellowship; and thus, says an excellent annalist†, some shoots of the evangelical vine were transmitted from the city of Strasburg, and took root among the churches of France.

Dr. Meyer of Strasburg renounces popery. A. D. 1524.

Doctor Sebastian Meyer, who was a celebrated preacher in the Franciscan church at Strasburg, made a public retractation of his papistical tenets in the year 1524; and this event very much strengthened the faith of the converts to the new system of sound doctrine. Meyer enumerated ten articles

* Sleidan. lib. iv. † Abraham Scultetus.

of the Romish corruptions, renounced them all, and boldly published, at Berne, in Switzerland, his confutation of them from Scripture *. CENT. XVI.

To relate the particulars of the triumphs of evangelical doctrine in Westphalia, in the duchy of Mecklenburg, in Pomerania and Livonia, and at Magdeburg and Bremen, would carry us beyond the limits of the plan of this history. The Reformation gained ground even at Brunswic and Leipsic, notwithstanding the persevering enmity of their respective sovereigns.

But this blessed revolution was not brought about without much persecution. In places, however, where the enmity of the rulers of the people, whether ecclesiastical or civil, was overawed by numbers of converts to the new system, the sufferings of the godly were slight, compared with what took place where the friends of Reformation were few and had little authority, and were exposed to the merciless rage either of a blind prejudiced populace, or of domineering bishops and bigoted magistrates.

Martyrdom of Henry Zutphen.

Luther has recorded the martyrdom of Henry of Zutphen, with much Christian feeling. This man had been one of his disciples, and was prior of the Augustine friars at Antwerp, where, on account of his zeal in the cause of religion, he was cast into prison. Some spirited, pious women effected his release; and when he was purposing to visit his religious friends at Wittemberg, he received so pressing an invitation from the senate and inhabitants of Bremen, that he complied with it, and preached the Gospel there for the space of two years †. Luther describes the hearts of the people of this city as being in a most astonishing state of preparation for the reception of the Gospel, notwithstanding the opposition of their bishop ‡. His account of this

* Scultet. 216.

† This is the same man called Henry Muller, p. 132.

‡ Miro desiderio et voto populus afficitur. Ep. II. 98.

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pious and patient sufferer well deserves a place in the Appendix*. Our reformer sent it to his evangelical friends at Bremen, along with an animated comment on the tenth Psalm, composed on the occasion, and also an epistle full of consolatory and encouraging reflections. "Such," says he, "is the energy of the Divine Spirit, that there is now almost every where a numerous communion of holy men, both preachers and hearers. It is true some of them are killed, others imprisoned, or driven into banishment, and, to be short, all are afflicted and suffer disgrace for the cross of Christ. But what is this but a revival of the true Christian life; of which the dreadful persecutions and sufferings appear to the world intolerable? Nevertheless, according to the Psalmist the blood of his saints is dear in the sight of the Lord.—Without doubt Henry of Zutphen, lately murdered by the Ditmarsians, was eminently one of these. He hath freely sealed with his blood his testimony to the Christian truth. Before him John Voes and Henry Esch obtained the crown of martyrdom at Brussels†. Henry of Zutphen is a third beautiful and bright example. I may add to the catalogue Casper Tauber, who was lately burnt at Vienna, and a bookseller named George, whom the Hungarians put to death; and lastly, I am informed that at Prague, in Bohemia, a person has been deprived of life for no other fault, than having forsaken the licentious pretensions to celibacy, and contracted a truly honourable Christian marriage. These and similar instances are the sacrifices, which in a short time will extinguish with their blood every remaining spark of the Papacy. Thus it was that the holy martyrs of old proved the truth of their doctrines by shedding their blood in the glorious cause of the Gospel.

"To boast of such instances as these is not in the

* See Appen. Henry of Zutphen: also Luth. Ep. II. 253.

† Page 148.

power of men who have seduced the world with an hypocritical dependance on free-will, good works, and human righteousness. Satan persecutes unto death no one for these doctrines. They rather lead to dignity, and power, and wealth, and a luxurious life. Wherefore, my good people of Bremen, I have judged it expedient to write and publish a circumstantial narrative of the martyrdom of Henry, and to exhort you neither to be overwhelmed with sorrow, nor exasperated with anger; but rather that you should praise and thank God for having discovered to you the wonderful ways of his gracious providence. In his great mercy he has sent his Gospel among you, and most manifestly bestowed a large portion of his spirit upon your teacher, the deceased Henry, so that you ought to have no doubt of his good-will toward you. Lament not the death of this excellent man, but pity his murderers, and pray for them; and not only for them, but their countrymen, who I hope by this sad event will be led to the knowledge of the truth. Many of them are said to have a love for the Gospel; and God will, I doubt not, overrule the loss of their preacher to their everlasting benefit, as he will severely punish those among them who remain impenitent.

"I entreat you to read and sing the tenth Psalm: it is peculiarly suitable to your circumstances. Afflict not yourselves for the loss of the martyrs who suffer for the glory of Christ; but rather give praise to God for his inestimable mercy in causing so much good to be brought out of evil."

How little of the real spirit of Luther appears in our ordinary histories of these times! By many this pious reformer is thought not only to have been bold and enterprising, but also headstrong, seditious, and revengeful. Whereas this letter to the inhabitants of Bremen, as well as a former one to his Christian converts at Miltenberg*, are no more than fair

* Page 147.

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specimens of his profound humility, sober confidence in the providence of God, and unfeigned resignation to his will. Fervent prayer, faith and hope in the divine promises, with a forgiving of injuries and a contemplation of select passages of Scripture, were the constant materials recommended by Luther for the consolation of his Christian friends in their afflictions.

Severe persecution.

A. D. 1523, & 1524.

All the accounts agree that in the years 1523 and 1524 the persecutions were excessively severe. A single well-authenticated instance will often demonstrate both the temper of the rulers, and the prevailing sentiments of the people. For example, at Antwerp, a certain person had been in the habit of explaining the Gospel, on Sundays, to a vast concourse of people. An express order was issued to forbid the practice. The people however met in the dock-yards; and, as their usual preacher or expositor did not make his appearance, a zealous youth, named Nicolaus, placed himself in a boat near the shore, and addressed the audience in a very pious manner from the chapter concerning the five loaves and two fishes: but the very next day he was ordered to be seized, and put into a sack lest he should be known by the people; and in that state he was suddenly thrown into the river*.

In Bavaria, Luther informs us, that though the good seed could scarcely be said to be yet sown, the cross and persecution of the word prevailed: "The wild beasts rage," says he, "but the blood which they shed will soon stifle their fury†."

* Scultet. 193. † Ep. II. 236.

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FROM THE PERSECUTIONS IN 1523 AND 1524, TO THE DEATH OF THE ELECTOR OF SAXONY.

SACRAMENTAL CONTROVERSY.——CAROLSTADT.
WAR WITH THE PEASANTS.——MUNZER.
LUTHER AND CAROLSTADT.
DEATH OF THE ELECTOR OF SAXONY.

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Sacramental Controversy, 1524.

A. D. 1524.

WE have already observed, p. 154, that in the year 1524, there arose among the friends of the Reformation a tedious and fatal controversy respecting the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist. Luther had rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, but maintained, nevertheless, that along with the elements of bread and wine the real body and blood of Christ were received by the partakers of the Lord's Supper. It is a memorable instance of human imbecility, that a man who had risen superior to the habits and prejudices of education in so many other respects, and who, through the grace of God and the instruction of the written word, had been more completely emancipated from vulgar and fashionable absurdities than any mere philosopher in any age had ever been, should in this single point remain so unreasonably attached to the opinion which he had imbibed in his youth. Our astonishment is increased by this circumstance, that he could allow the scriptural expressions to be consistent with the admission of the REALITY of the elements according to the plain testimony of our

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senses, and yet should think that those same expressions do still imply that the partaker of the real bread and wine does also partake at the same time of the material substance of Christ's human body. Thus, however, the advocates for the doctrine of CONSUBSTANTIATION must argue. And the case before us shows, that great men are not so in all things; and that it is never wise to adhere implicitly to the authority of mere fallible men as teachers.

Carolstadt was, in this point, the open antagonist of Luther. I have spent much time in endeavouring to develop the true history of the origin of the Sacramental controversy, not so much on account of the merits of the argumentation which took place in the course of it, as of the contrary representations of the ecclesiastical writers respecting the motives of these two early reformers. After much reflection, I am convinced that what is certain in this matter is in very little room.

Carolstadt retires to Orlamund.

The previous intemperate conduct of Carolstadt had so lowered his reputation at Wittemberg, that he found it expedient, if not absolutely necessary, to leave a situation where all friendly and confidential intercourse with his former religious connexions was almost at an end. Accordingly, he retired to Orlamund, a little town of Thuringia in the electorate of Saxony, where, without legitimate appointment, though with the consent of the inhabitants, he became their spiritual pastor. Here Carolstadt not only soon broached his opinion of the Eucharist, but raised new disturbances by his furious discourses concerning the abolition of images. He appears also to have boasted of having been favoured with supernatural communications; and was represented as a partizan of the turbulent fanatic Thomas Munzer*. The university of Wittemberg summoned him to return back and discharge in person the ordinary

* Seck. 302. Du Pin, c. xviii. Melch. Adam. 83. Maimbourg, sect. 2. Comment. de Luth. II. 11.

duties enjoined him by the statutes in their school and Church. Carolstadt promised to obey, provided he could obtain the leave of his parishioners, the Orlamundians, whom however at the same time he is said to have excited to arrogate to themselves the divine right of appointing their own pastor. The elector of Saxony was so disgusted with the insolent letters which they wrote on this occasion, treating the academical claim as a papistical encroachment, that he peremptorily commanded both them and their teacher to submit to the legal authority of the university and the chapter*. He likewise ordered Luther to visit Orlamund, and inquire into the truth of the various reports, and endeavour to appease the people. Accordingly, as he passed through Jene, he preached with great zeal against the enthusiastic spirit of Munzer; and in making a vehement and laboured attack upon the turbulent image-breakers, he was understood to represent Carolstadt and his party as actuated by the same spirit as that of the seditious leader of the anabaptists. Carolstadt who was present at Luther's discourse was so enraged with the invective, which he conceived to be directed principally at himself, that he followed Luther in great heat to his inn, where there soon commenced a long and acrimonious disputation between these two divines; in which Carolstadt disavowed all connexion with Munzer; and Luther appears to have admitted his apology, at least so far as concerned the charge of any preconcerted association with that enthusiastic incendiary. But he expressed the utmost dislike both of Carolstadt's opinion on the Sacrament, and of his practice in the demolition of images; and then challenged him to support in writing what he had asserted on the former subject, and engaged to refute his arguments. After this, Luther proceeded to Orlamund; but having previously received from the inhabitants certain fanatical and abusive letters,

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* Arch. Vin. S. II. 28.

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which he supposed to have been dictated by their teacher, he would gladly have conferred with them ALONE on the subject of the removal of the images; but their pastor Carolstadt took care to be present, ready to assist his flock*. Instantly all prospect of an amicable issue to the conference vanished. Luther grew warm, and the Orlamundians quite furious and abusive. "I saw very clearly," says he, "what sort of seed this fine teacher had been sowing at Orlamund; and I had good reason to congratulate myself, that I had fortunately slipped away from among them with my life, and was not covered over with stones and dirt. Some of them, as I was going away, uttered the most horrid imprecations against me, and prayed God that I might break my neck before I should be out of the town."

Carolstadt still continued at Orlamund, and wrote letters to the elector full of bitter accusations against Luther; and not content with this, he instigated his hearers to do the same, and likewise taught them in their letters to defend, from the Decalogue, their late conduct in pulling down images. Such violent proceedings appear to have at last exhausted the patience both of the elector and his brother. These princes peremptorily expelled Carolstadt from their territories, and absolutely rejected the intercession of the Orlamundians in his behalf. Carolstadt, after his departure, wrote letters to his people, which were read in full congregation upon the toll of the bell, and were subscribed thus, "Andreas Bodenstenius Carolstadt, UNHEARD, UNCONVICTED, BANISHED, by Martin Luther†."

"Thus," says Luther, in a letter to Amsdorf, "matters are so changed, that I, who should have been a martyr myself, am making martyrs of others‡."

Expelled from Thuringia, Carolstadt repaired to Strasburg, and thence to Basle; where, without the

* Du Pin. Seck. † Ep. II. 236. ‡ Ibid. 237.

privity of any persons, except the anabaptists of the place, he procured the printing of several of his pamphlets on the Sacrament. CENT. XVI.

In regard to his banishment, Luther constantly denies himself to have been the cause of it; at the same time he acknowledges that he could wish the charge to be true, for that he should not doubt being able to give good reasons for his conduct. "Moreover," says he, in a letter to the Strasburgians, "I really rejoice that he has been banished from our part of the country; and I most earnestly wish that he had no opportunity of showing his wild and seditious spirit among you..... However, I own, that if I had been duke of Saxony, Carolstadt would never have been banished, unless, indeed, I had been compelled to yield to the importunate petitions of the people. But, my dear friends, do not ye be influenced by my indiscreet, nay foolish good-nature; do ye ACT LIKE WISE MEN. Perhaps I may be imprudent enough to write on the points in dispute, though I am entirely convinced that the devil contrives to sow these seeds of controversy among men, for the express purpose of making them talk and write, and say; What excellent, holy men are these! What wicked, bad characters are those! and thus he takes up or deludes the minds of all sides by such novelties, and makes them forget the great articles of faith and practice. Let every one of you for himself sedulously study the true nature of the Law, of the Gospel, of Faith, of Christ's kingdom, of Christian liberty, of charity, and patience; also the nature of human constitutions, and many things of this kind which are found necessary throughout the whole Christian life;—and then you will not be found blamable or deficient, though you should have thrown down no images..... I would that, my brethren, your preachers would endeavour to draw men as much as possible from Luther, and from Carolstadt, that is, from MEN; and lead them to

Luther writes to the Strasburgians.

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Christ, the gift of God, who is freely made to us wisdom, righteousness, redemption, and sanctification. These mad prophets have never understood, have never experienced this matter. They boast of hearing distinct voices from heaven, and of leading lives most extraordinarily pure; they use pompous and even marvellous expressions, which they themselves do not comprehend; and in this way they disturb restless consciences, and compass their purpose, which is, to be looked up unto, and to excite astonishment; but in the mean time Christ is forgotten or treated with contempt..... My good brethren, entreat Almighty God the Father to preserve you from temptation; and of his inexhaustible mercy, to carry on his own work in your souls. This, through our Saviour Christ, is my own most fervent prayer, and it is the prayer that comforts me. These prophets, I am persuaded, do not pray for the success of their plans. A man cannot pray without some degree of a good conscience; but the system of these men originated in impiety and presumption; and they are still carried away with ambition and enthusiasm, and are not aware of the disgraceful and ignominious end that awaits them*."

After Carolstadt had been exiled about the space of five months, he appears to have been desirous of a reconciliation with Luther; and for that purpose he wrote a sort of penititential letter to Spalatinus, requesting his interference and good offices. As Luther was of a most placable temper, he did not hesitate to intercede with the elector, and to petition his highness "that he would be pleased to permit Carolstadt to re-enter his dominions, and to have a friendly conference with Luther." Nevertheless, judging from the insolence of his letters, he said he could have very little hope of him. In fact, Luther's principal motive for acceding to this measure seems to have been, tha he might thereby do away the

* Epist. II. 251.

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slanderous reports of having been the cause of Carolstadt's banishment*. The prince rejected the petition; and caused Luther to be informed, that he did not choose to grant safe conducts for such purposes; they might if they pleased confer together OUT of his dominions; and in so doing he thought they were perhaps more likely to be reconciled.

Carolstadt now wandered from place to place through the higher Germany, and at length made a pause at Rotenburg; where, as usual, he soon raised tumults, and incited the people to pull down the statues and paintings. Luther heard of his proceedings, and, in a letter to a friend, said, "I have not been able to obtain a safe conduct for Carolstadt; and therefore he will continue to vent his furious declamations against me†." However, when the seditious faction of the peasants, with Munzer their ringleader, was effectually suppressed, we find him in the greatest difficulties, and even in danger of his life from his supposed connexion with the enthusiastic rebels who had spread such devastation through Germany. Many persons in various places were seized, and among them even some of the evangelical clergy of Rotenburg, and were dragged to punishment. Carolstadt narrowly escaped, through being let down by the wall of the town in a basket. Thus reduced to the last extremities, he and his wife incessantly entreated both the elector and Luther, that they might be allowed to return into their own country. He said, he could clear himself of having had any concern in the late rebellion; and if not, he would cheerfully undergo any punishment that could be inflicted upon him. With this view he wrote a little TRACT, in which he takes much pains to justify himself from the charge of sedition; and he sent A LETTER likewise to Luther, in which he earnestly begs his assistance in the publishing of the

* Arch. Vin. II. 28. Ep. II. 279. b. † Epist. II. 280. b.

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tract as well as in the more general design of establishing his innocence. Luther's judgment was so impressed with a sense of the reasonableness of affording an accused person every opportunity of defence, and his generous feelings so touched with the submissive application of an adversary in distress, that he immediately published Carolstadt's letter, and declared, that though he differed very materially from him in sentiment, yet he would not disappoint the expectations of a man who in confidence had cast himself on his mercy at once, rather than fly for refuge and protection to those who had instigated him to hostilities*. He therefore called on the magistrates, and on the people, to give a fair hearing to an unfortunate fugitive, who pleaded not GUILTY, and challenged inquiry†. "Attention to such a requisition," he said, "was no more than what common justice claimed, and the peculiar duties of Christianity enjoined."

Besides the little tract here mentioned, Carolstadt sent another to Luther, in which he professes, that in what he had hitherto published on the Supper of our Lord, he never pretended to have settled the point, but to have written merely for the purpose of argument and investigation. Luther accepted this apology; but at the same time he admonished the people, that as the author himself had openly declared he was in doubt on the subject, they ought to

* Sleidan, 139.

† It is painful to find this part of Luther's conduct, so very moderate and truly Christian, invidiously represented by Maclaine; as though it had proceeded from a conviction of having treated Carolstadt, previously in an unworthy manner. Mosheim, p. 166, the Note. Beausobre also, without the least ceremony, asserts that Luther had treated Carolstadt in a merciless way, p. 228.—The best answer to all such harsh and inconsiderate censures is the simple production of the transactions themselves, as reported in the ancient authentic documents, and not as they have been variously coloured in their transfer from one party-writer to another.

be most particularly on their guard not to embrace uncertainties. CENT. XVI.

Moreover, after much importunate entreaty, he succeeded in procuring from the elector JOHN * a SAFE CONDUCT for the return of Carolstadt into the territories from which he had been exiled. "By earnest and constant prayers," says he, "I have at last obtained leave from the prince, contrary to the sentiments of his whole court, that Carolstadt be allowed to live in a little country village about a mile from Wittemberg. May God be pleased to bring this man at length to a right state of mind!" .... "Yesterday we baptized one of his children, or rather re-baptized him. The sponsors were Jonas, Melancthon, and my Ketha. Who would have suspected last year, that those who reviled baptism, calling it a bath, fit only for dogs, would now have petitioned to have it administered to themselves by their adversaries? Whether they are sincere or not is only known to God! Very astonishing things however do happen; and God's ways are not our ways †."

These and many other circumstances make it sufficiently evident that there was no great cordiality in this reconciliation of parties, nor in the minds of Carolstadt's former associates any high idea of his sincerity, nor, lastly, much hope of his future discretion. In fact, Luther urged with the elector, as the opinion both of Melancthon and himself, that it was much better that Carolstadt should remain in some obscure part of the electorate, and not be allowed either to write or to preach, than that he should travel from one place to another, and spread his erroneous notions.

Carolstadt appears to have been recalled about the Autumn of 1525, and to have then made a public recantation of what he had advanced on the Sacrament; and in the succeeding November we find Carolstadt recalled. A. D. 1525.

* Frederic the Wise died in 1525, and his brother John succeeded him. † Amsdorf, 312. Ad Hausman, 317.

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him transmitting to the elector a written formula for the same purpose, which, he says, was prescribed to him by the faithful and celebrated divines of Wittemberg*.

Concerning these transactions an excellent annalist, and one by no means partial to Luther, observes, that mankind reasoned in the following manner. "When Carolstadt sent his little tracts to Luther, he was either serious or not. If serious, we must condemn the vehemence with which he had formerly defended a doctrine respecting which he was absolutely in doubt. If not serious, then such levity of spirit is utterly indefensible." The same author tells us that there were some who positively maintained, that before the elector had agreed to the recall of Carolstadt, Luther had ventured to receive him back again, and had shut him up privately in the monastery of Wittemberg†.

Whatever doubts may be entertained of the sincerity of Carolstadt in the Sacramental controversy, every careful student of ecclesiastical history must acquit Luther of using the smallest degree of duplicity or artifice in that unhappy contest. We may lament his obstinacy, his violence, and his want of candour, of which the proofs are too numerous in the course of his opposition to his antagonists; further, we may also admit that the turbulence, the precipitation, and the vanity of Carolstadt, were in a great measure the occasion both of calling forth and of exasperating these unchristian dispositions in Luther; but still we must take care to discriminate between passion and hypocrisy, between firm conviction and political manœuvre, between that contempt for an ostentatious and intemperate adversary which is apt to unfit the mind for deliberate investigation, and that intolerable pride of heart which wilfully persists in error, can bear no contradiction, but rather than not appear to dictate to others, is ready to sacrifice

* Vin. Arch. II. 28. † Scult. 254.

the strongest impressions of reason and religion.— It seemed the more necessary to insist on these distinctions, for the sake of guarding the Reader against the misrepresentations of historians, who have never seen, or certainly not digested, the authentic original documents upon which the true character of the great Saxon Reformer depends*. CENT. XVI.

It appears to me that nothing but motives the most strictly conscientious could have prevented Luther from adopting the tenet of his Sacramentarian opponents. It would have been a new, and, in his hands a most powerful weapon against his grand enemies the papists. Let us hear himself on this point. "I neither can," says he, "nor will deny, that if Carolstadt or any one else could have persuaded me, during the last five years, that in the Sacrament there was nothing but mere bread and wine, he would have conferred on me a great obligation. I have examined this matter with the utmost anxiety, and with persevering diligence; I have stretched every nerve with a view to unravel the mystery; for I most clearly saw that the new tenet would give me a great advantage in my contests with the Papacy. Moreover, I have had a correspondence on this subject with two persons much more acute than Carolstadt, and not at all disposed to twist words from their natural meaning. But the text in the Gospel is so strong and unequivocal, that I have found myself compelled to submit to its decision. Its force can be eluded in no way whatever, much less by the fictitious glosses of a giddy brain.

"Nay, after all, at this very time, if any one could prove to me, by good Scriptural testimony, that there is only bread and wine in the Sacrament, he would have no occasion to attack me with any degree

* Maclaine in Mosheim in various places, particularly p. 641. and Beausobre, Liv. IV. & V. &c.

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of bitterness or animosity. Alas! if I know myself, I am sufficiently inclined by nature to take that side. But while Carolstadt, instead of producing Scriptural testimony, only rages at me like a madman, such conduct makes me the more positive in the support of my sentiments. If I had not already known that the ground he has taken is untenable, the futile arguments suggested by his wild imagination would have convinced me that the opinion was altogether weak and frivolous. Indeed I am inclined to think Carolstadt himself is not in earnest; for if he be serious, and yet can write in so absurd and trifling a manner, I must conclude him to be under a judicial infatuation of Almighty God. Carolstadt, had he been really in earnest, knows too much of Greek and Hebrew to have produced such a ridiculous mixture of observations dependant on those two languages.

"Further, in the affair of pulling down images, I could easily pass by his excesses, provided the matter ended there: for I suppose that I have already done more by my writings towards the destruction of image-worship, than his intemperate proceedings will ever be able to effect. But the mischief consists in this; he teaches the people, THAT UNLESS THEY DO THESE THINGS, THEY ARE NOT CHRISTIANS. This is a language not to be borne. St. Paul says, 'We know that an idol is nothing in the world;'—of course it is nothing whether it stand or fall; why then are the consciences of Christians to be tortured by things in which Christianity does not consist?.. I fear my answer to his publications must contain heavy accusations against him, for his rash and tumultuary spirit. Let every man avoid this malignant, delusive spirit. When I met him at Jene in Thuringia, he almost persuaded me, by quoting a particular Scripture, not to confound his spirit with that deadly, bloody spirit of the anabaptists: but as soon as I arrived among his flock at Orlamund, I

was not at a loss to comprehend what sort of seed this fine teacher had been sowing *." CENT. XVI.

THE WAR OF THE PEASANTS.

THE more scrupulously we examine the principles of Martin Luther, the more opposite we always find them to a spirit both of enthusiasm and sedition.—The name of Thomas Munzer has already been mentioned †, as well as the fanatical practices of him and his connexions. The absurd and wicked proceedings of such men would find no place in a History of the Church of Christ, were it not, that, by their delusive arguments, and turbulent actions, they frequently become an occasion for trying the wisdom and the soundness of professing Christians: and so, in the event, they prove a snare to the proud, the ignorant, and unstable; while they exercise the patience of the humble, and increase the understanding of the wise. God bringeth good out of evil: 'let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall!'

Never did the solidity of our Reformer's judgment and the purity of his motives appear more striking than in the case before us.—Soon after the first appearance of the Celestial Prophets, as they were called, when not only the elector and his court, but also the whole university of Wittemberg, with Melancthon at their head, were absolutely puzzled and almost confounded by the pretensions of these extraordinary men, the sound sense and almost instinctive discernment of Luther pointed out to him at once the just treatment to which they were entitled. We have seen the wise advice which he gave to Melancthon ‡. He also exhorted his friend Amsdorf not to be anxious about them. Scripture, he said, would be his infallible guide, provided he and his associates

* See above, p. 194. It was with difficulty Luther escaped with his life. Also Ep. II. 251.

† Page 44. ‡ Page 47, 48.

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were not too much in a hurry, and would but try the Spirits whether they were from God. The prophets boasted of having conversations with the Almighty—"A circumstance," said Luther, "to my mind, on the very face of it, exceedingly suspicious *."

Munzer.

Of Thomas Munzer he speaks in the following terms: "I cannot endure his spirit. He affects to commend my doctrines, and yet treats them with contempt, and is constantly aiming at something far beyond them. Then the man uses such absurd, unusual, and unscriptural expressions, that you would conclude him to be either crazy or drunk. He avoids all conference with us. I am endeavouring to procure an interview with him, for the purpose of hearing him explain his tenets: but I do not know that I shall succeed. WE have no fears of hearing or of being heard, or of conferring with any Persons, whatever be THEIR dispositions †."

Munzer could not be induced to come to Wittemberg, but remained at Alsted, a Town on the confines of Thuringia, in the Electorate of Saxony. There he inveighed against both the pope and Luther. "The doctrine of the latter," he said, "was not sufficiently spiritual; it was indeed altogether carnal. Divines should exert their utmost endeavours to acquire a spirit of prophecy, otherwise their knowledge of divinity would not be worth one halfpenny. They should consider their God as at hand, and not far off ‡." Moreover, if men would be saved, they must fast, look grave, talk little, and wear plain clothes, and let their beards grow. This is the cross of Christ, and the true mortification. Then, thus prepared, they should leave the crowd, and think continually of God, and demand a sign from him by which they may know certainly that he has a regard for them, and that Christ died for

* Ep. II. 46. † Ep. II. 152.
‡ Munzer's Letter to Melancthon, Scult. 238.

them. If the sign does not appear at the moment, they should persevere, and be instant in prayer; and even expostulate with God as though he did not keep his promises made in Scripture. An angry expostulation of this sort, he said, demonstrated the fervour of the soul, and was highly pleasing to God; and would not fail in the end to produce some very conspicuous and satisfactory declaration of the Divine will. Dreams, he maintained, were a method in which God revealed his will to men, and it was through the means of them that, in general, answers to prayers were to be expected. Then, if any person had had a dream which admitted of an interpretation, instead of preaching to the people, Munzer made a laboured eulogium on the dreamer:—and, in this manner, he by degrees conciliated to himself a number of the inhabitants of Alsted, who entered into a conspiracy with him, subscribed their names and took a solemn oath, for the express purpose of murdering all wicked persons, appointing new princes and magistrates, and organizing the world afresh; and upon such a plan, that pious and good people only should have the upper hand.—The enthusiast declared, that for all this, he had the positive command of God. CENT. XVI.

Mildness and moderation were essential parts of the character of Frederic the WISE; and therefore we are not to wonder that, so long as the proceedings of this wicked incendiary were confined to the interpretation of dreams and supposed revelations from God, he should have so far tolerated his extravagant pretensions, as not to drive him into exile. But as soon as his seditious designs became sufficiently plain, he judged it necessary to give directions for his removal from the electorate*. Munzer then retired to Nuremberg, but was not able to form a party there. He was quickly expelled by the inhabitants. Thence he proceeded to Mulhausen,

* Arch. Vin. S. 305.

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where he had more success. He became the minister of the common people, and stimulated them to degrade the old magistrates and elect new ones; and to turn the monks out of doors, and seize their houses and property. The very best and richest house fell to the share of Munzer himself, who was now become both the first ecclesiastic and first magistrate of the place. He decided all points in a summary way by the Bible or by inspiration, and taught the doctrine of perfect equality, and of a community of goods. The poor ceased to labour, and supplied their wants from the rich by force. The number of this deluded rabble increased in a most astonishing manner; their infatuated leader became every day more insolent, and persuaded himself that the time for carrying his detestable designs into execution was fast advancing.

Luther, it should seem, by his letters to the elector of Saxony, certainly at first promoted that good prince's spirit of patient forbearance toward Munzer. "Your highness," says he, "I had better bear with him till he be more ripe. There is a great deal in him which has not shown itself as yet*." In this same letter however he calls Munzer, Satan, and intimates with sufficient plainness that he expected nothing but mischief from him in future. Moreover, afterwards, he became dissatisfied with the elector's dilatory indecision respecting the whole business of the prophets; and at length, when Munzer had unfolded his wicked purposes so as to leave no room for doubt, he presented to the prince Frederic, and to the Duke his brother, a very spirited and elaborate address on the danger with which the country was threatened from this fanatical rebel and his deluded associates.

He begins like an apostle. "Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ;" and then proceeds to observe, that "it is Satan's

* Reg. N. III. 194. S. Sleidan. V. 118.

method to attempt to crush every revival of the Divine word, first by force, and, if that does not succeed, then by false spirits, by artful and mischievous teachers. It WAS so in the first ages of the propagation of the Gospel: He deluged Christendom with the blood of the Martyrs. But this did not answer his purpose; he therefore sent forth a tribe of false prophets, and filled every corner of the world with heresies, till at length the papacy, that most powerful of all the antichrists, fully completed his designs. IT IS so at this very time.—The pope, the emperor, kings, and princes, and wicked bishops, like madmen, rage against the Gospel, and do their utmost to oppress it. Satan however is sufficiently acute to see that they will not prevail, but will bring down the Divine wrath upon themselves; and in the mean time he produces lying spirits and abandoned sectaries to do his business.

"This same Satanic Spirit,—continued Luther—after wandering through dry places for almost three years, seeking rest, and finding none, has at length taken advantage of the protection afforded by your highness's mild and peaceful government, and hath built his nest in your territories at Alsted, with a view to commence war against us who preach the Gospel.

"Nevertheless, it is my singular satisfaction to find that these madmen openly boast that they do not belong to us; and that they have neither learnt nor received any thing from us, but have been conversing with God for the space of three years. They reckon little of our teaching faith, charity, and the cross at Wittemberg. 'You must hear,' say they, 'the Voice of God itself.' And if Scripture be appealed to, they instantly cry Babel, Babel, Babel!—moreover, these miserable men have such a degree of pride and positiveness as I never heard or read of in my life.

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"My reason for addressing your highness at present is this: These enthusiasts hold it right to progagate their doctrines by force. They made no secret of this at Wittemberg: and their declaration sunk deep into my mind. I saw plainly that they intended to overturn the existing governments, though Christ expressly told Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world.

"I do therefore, most seriously entreat your highnesses, to employ that authority which God has given you, in preventing the schemes of these seditious persons, who would turn every thing upside down.

"They say they are moved by the Spirit; but I must observe, that it is a mark of a very bad spirit, when it exerts itself ONLY in pulling down temples and monasteries, and burning images. The greatest villains can do such things as these.

"They absolutely decline all inquiry into their principles. They talk pompously in private corners, and inflame the minds of the deluded mob, but will not open their mouths before any persons whom they think disposed to examine the grounds of their pretensions.

"I must tell them, I have augured no good of them since they refused to open their sentiments before our evangelical friends at Wittemberg. They look on me as a lifeless Christian, and as one who never was favoured with hearing a voice from heaven: But, in the name of every thing that is good, suppose I had acted in this manner when I was called before the papists,—What triumphs should I have afforded them?

"With how much humility I proceeded, how gently, and step by step, in the first attacks upon the papacy, my writings are a testimony. Yet this same lowly spirit has produced effects such as these fanatics have never ventured to aim at or expect. And,—not to boast,—I stood forward, in a very critical and

dangerous moment, as a public disputant at Leipsic, before a numerous audience. At Augsburg I appeared before my enemies without a safe-conduct; and at Worms I looked both the emperor and the whole German nobility in the face, though I knew the public faith had been violated on a former not very dissimilar occasion. Yet I made no pretence of hearing voices from heaven, or of being possessed of supernatural talents, or of having any thing of that spirit which has appeared at Alsted. CENT. XVI.

"It is not my wish that any persons, no not even these fanatics, should be hindered from preaching. Let them have free liberty to exhibit the best specimen they can of their erudition. Let them teach, but keep their hands from violence: or, if they will persist in their ferocious, seditious practices, it will then be your duty to restrain them, and, without hesitation, to banish them from your dominions.

"The warfare of an evangelist is of a spiritual nature. He is to preach and to bear the cross. We no where read that either Christ or his apostles pulled down churches or images; but that, when the Divine Word had penetrated the hearts of men, the heathen churches and images of themselves came to nothing. We are to act in the same manner. Deliver enslaved consciences from the doctrines of the monasteries, and the buildings will soon be empty; and then it will be the province of the civil governors to determine what is to be done with them. But what harm can a heap of stones or wood do to us? Not a particle of any building was ever thrown down or set on fire by me: yet by my tongue and my pen the monasteries almost every where have been desolated. Now if I had attempted to bring about this revolution by violence, as these prophets do, I might have had to boast of levelling a few buildings, but the minds of men would have been still enchained in darkness and captivity as before, and the salvation of souls by no means promoted.

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"It is allowed, that the Roman pontiff has suffered more from me than what any monarch, with the whole force of his kingdom, could have made him to suffer. Yet have I not used the least violence in this contest. On the other hand, I ask what signal exploits have these prophets to boast of?—Memorable victories indeed, over wood, stones, statues, and pictures!—Decisive proofs of the nature of the spirit that influences them!

"These insane wretches as yet have performed no miracle in attestation of their commission, except that of collecting mobs, despising the magistrates ordained by divine authority, throwing down statues, and requiring an implicit belief that they are the people of God.

"A just application of the Divine word, in the production of TRUE faith, is the only way to correct all bad practices. The removal of external evils, while the heart is devoid of this principle, is of little service. Such a heart soon invents new ones. The true method of expelling Satan and ruining his devices, is that of the New Testament; namely, the exercise of preaching the word of God. This lays hold of the heart, and cures the evil radically.

"I conclude with humbly imploring your highnesses to resist these madmen effectually. Let the sacred Scriptures have the pre-eminence; and let us, like true Christians, have recourse to no other arms. Let every door and window be shut against sedition, and the occasions of it. The common people are by nature sufficiently prone thereunto. But let it ever be remembered, that, though these enthusiasts boast of being influenced by six hundred spirits, this their constant disposition to fighting, as well as their other acts of violence, is a proof that they are not Christians*.

"May the right hand of Almighty God strengthen and preserve your highnesses!

"MARTIN LUTHER."

* Tom. VII. Wittemb. Ep. II. 223.

CENT. XVI.

Situation of Germany.

A. D. 1524, 1525.

Here let the learned reader for a moment reflect on the situation of Germany about the end of 1524, and the beginning of 1525—The several princes and states at variance respecting the grand tenets of the whole papal system—Intestine divisions among the reformers themselves, concerning the nature of the Eucharist—The almost certain prospect of an immediate civil war, from immense crowds of ignorant and seditious peasants and vassals, associated with multitudes of licentious and dissolute enthusiasts, rendered outrageous and cruel by the harangues of Munzer and other incendiaries of his description.

The conduct of Luther about the period of this memorable conjuncture, has fixed the character of this reformer beyond dispute.

We have already given ample proof of his wisdom in the affair of the prophets; and we have before observed, that he never did things by halves.

It was not enough therefore that Munzer had been driven out of the elector's dominions. As soon as Luther heard of his approach to Mulhausen, where he was known to have partizans, he gravely admonished the magistrates of the town not to receive him among them; "for he meditated nothing but robbery and murder, and other acts of violence. He was well known at Alsted. He had also emissaries, forming parties in various other places; but would never fully explain his designs. It could not be long before he would be better understood, and they would do well to profit by this friendly warning *."

Luther likewise published, in the beginning of 1525, what he called A TREATISE AGAINST THE CELESTIAL PROPHETS AND CAROLSTADT †. That unruly reformer had certainly been familiar with the leaders of the fanatical tribe, and had favoured their sentiments ‡: he had moreover, in his publications, spoken of Luther in the most offensive terms, had

* Sleidan, V. S. clxxvj. † Alt. III. in S. lib. II. p. 3.
‡ Melch. Adam. 83 et 129. Scult. 242.

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represented him as akin to Antichrist, and twice as bad as a papist; and in general had attacked him in every way with so much fury as to displease even his own party *. Our author, in his answer, positively denies that it was through his means that Carolstadt had been banished; though at all times he was neither afraid nor ashamed to own that he had delivered an explicit opinion of the pernicious tendency of the Alstedine Spirit, as he called it, and had instigated princes and governors to be watchful and active in suppressing it. "Although," says he, "it may be true, and candour may require me to believe, that Carolstadt does not INTEND † to promote sedition and murder, yet I must say, that so long as he persists in raising headstrong mobs, and exciting them to demolish statues with unauthorized violence, he possesses the same seditious, sanguinary spirit that has shown itself at Alsted. But, you say, he will not PERSIST in these practices.—My answer

* S. Lib. II. IX. Ep. II. 247.

† On what grounds could Beausobre affirm that Luther's treatise against the Prophets seemed to be written only for the purpose of oppressing Carolstadt? This is one of the most uncandid assertions which I ever remember to have seen. What! were there no laudable motives to which the conduct of Luther might fairly be ascribed in thus warning and exhorting his countrymen, at so critical a juncture, against the seditious and enthusiastic practices of the Anabaptists and their associates? The observations of this historian, III. 228—230, on Luther's sentiments, as also his harsh judgment of the excellent Seckendorf, in p. 123, appear to me uncommonly partial and unwarranted. Some even of the most brilliant parts of Luther's conduct are not relished by Beausobre; witness his remarks on that memorable letter of our reformer which he wrote to Frederic from Borna, p. 50 of this volume. In that letter Beausobre sees more of pride and presumption than extraordinary piety. On the other hand, he skims dexterously over the excesses of Carolstadt, shelters him as well as he can under the shield of Melancthon, endeavours to excite pity on account of his misfortunes, and says not one word of his seizing the pulpit at Orlamund in contempt of the elector, and of the university also in which rested the right of patronage.—It is not easy to account for all this manifest partiality. See Beausobre, II. 214—224, and 207, also III. 228. Comm. Luth. Ep. II. IX.

is, I cannot credit his fine speeches. How often has Melancthon in vain admonished him not to raise tumults respecting ceremonies, and yet has he continued to defend the breakers of the peace to the very last!

"Moreover, I own it weighs very much with me that he is known to keep company with these prophets, who are the very source of this Alstedine spirit. From these he hears lessons, and with these he is closely connected *."

Luther, in the former part of his treatise, most earnestly entreats the magistrates to animadvert severely upon all preachers who should exhort their congregations without warrant to pull down images and churches. The danger, he said, was, lest the common people, actuated by this tumultuary spirit of Carolstadt, should imagine that they had the authority of their Bibles to do the same things which the Israelites were commanded to do. From destroying images, they would easily proceed to destroy men. In regard to the mass and the elevation of the host, he said, if the papists would but give up the idea of the Eucharist being a sacrifice, he should have no dispute with them either about a harmless word or a harmless practice. The latter part † of the work is extremely interesting and instructive; firstly, as it lays open the way in which Carolstadt appears to have been led into his enthusiastic proceedings; and secondly, as it describes the argumentation by which the author himself was deluded into a belief of the doctrine of consubstantiation.

1. "God," says he, "deals with his creatures both by external means, as preaching and the outward signs of the Sacraments, and also by internal, as the operation of his Spirit and faith in the heart. Now in the ordinary course of his providence the

* Luth. contra Proph. p. 99 in Coc.

† Published 12 Feb. 1525. S. II. 27. Beausobre is mistaken in saying it did not appear till Feb. 2, 1526. II. 230.

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external means precede the internal: but Carolstadt perverts this order; he derides the water in baptism, and the bread and wine in the Sacrament; and would begin at once with the spirit of the ordinances. Then if you ask him what he understands by the Spirit, he instantly whirls you away into Utopian regions, tells you to remain perfectly calm and unoccupied, and in that state to expect a celestial voice. In a word, he rejects entirely the use of external means, and has invented a number of strange, barbarous, uncouth words, to express that obscure state of ADMIRATION, MORTIFICATION, SUSPENSION, FREEDOM FROM IMPURITY, and such like, in which the soul must be to favour the reception of the Spirit."

2. Luther makes excellent observations on the practical use of the Lord's Supper, and on the meaning of eating spiritually the body of Christ. He then proceeds to defend his unfortunate notion of the real presence. "We do not say that Christ is called down from heaven by the word of the officiating priest: for though he be present in the Sacrament, he does not leave heaven any more than he left it when he was in his mother's womb. We are not commanded to scrutinize in what manner Christ is in the bread; it is sufficient that he himself has said that it is so. Men may exclaim and contend for a thousand years, but they will never be able to take away the expressions, which are as clear as words can make them."

Thus Luther, in defending even an erroneous and obscure proposition, constrains us to recognise the usual vigour of his conceptions, and the precision of his language.

The causes of the RUSTIC WAR, or the WAR OF THE PEASANTS, as it has been called, were purely secular, and are to be sought for in the writings of the proper historians. This rebellion,

however, in its consequences, was so far connected with religion, that (1) it certainly retarded the progress of the blessed Reformation; (2) it also gave occasion to the papists to accuse the Protestants unjustly of holding seditious principles; and (3) lastly, it afforded the sound Protestants themselves an illustrious opportunity of exhibiting in their conduct the practical excellence of Christian doctrines. CENT. XVI.

In the former part of 1525, a prodigious multitude, composed chiefly of furious and enthusiastic peasants and vassals, arose suddenly in different parts of Germany, who took arms against their lawful governors, and were guilty of the most horrid and barbarous actions. Many of these rioters, it is true, had long groaned under heavy oppressive taxes and burthens; and, in their public manifestos they declare that they intend nothing further than to obtain a relaxation of the severity of their chiefs, and a greater portion of civil liberty. But the enthusiast Munzer availed himself of this troubled state of the empire, put himself at the head of the numerous and discontented rabble, inflamed their passions by his violent and delusive harangues, and, by his relation of visions and inspirations, and a pretended foresight of certain success, rendered them altogether desperate and outrageous. Rise of the Rustic War, A. D. 1525.

In this turbulent and extensive agitation of the lower orders of the people, it was probable enough that SOME, who professed themselves favourers of Lutheranism, would ignorantly or perversely misconstrue the reformer's doctrines of Christian liberty, and in that dangerous persuasion flock to the standard of the rebels: but the papal adversaries of the Reformation have by no means been content with this concession, or even with exaggerating the effects of this abuse of the Protestant faith; they have constantly laid the WHOLE mischief of this intestine dissension at the door of Luther and his disciples, and, in spite of the clearest and most

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positive contrary evidences, continued to represent the licentious and detestable faction of Munzer as originating in that reformer's tenets and instructions, and deriving its strength and numbers from the prevalence of the novel ecclesiastical system*.

On this account it becomes the more necessary to examine the facts with a scrupulous and even jealous attention. Melancthon has extolled Luther as a strenuous supporter of good government, and a decided enemy to every species of sedition†: nevertheless, let the student of this history carefully observe, whether, as often as opportunities arise, the conduct of this eminent theologian does in all respects confirm the report of his pious friend and biographer.

As soon as Luther found that all his labours in warning and instructing the princes, magistrates, and people, did not avail to repress the rising spirit of tumult and rebellion, but rather that the tempest appeared to thicken and portend a dreadful crisis, he determined, without loss of one moment of time, to address his countrymen of all ranks and orders in language still more explicit and decisive than any which he had hitherto used.

The style of his publication addressed to the COMMON PEOPLE is of this kind:

"Let every one beware of sedition, as a very heinous crime; and this not only in what relates to external actions, but even to words and secret thoughts. I might augur well of your professing yourselves ready to yield to the precepts of Scripture, but that I observe your boasts of a regard for pure evangelical faith and practice are absolutely without foundation. Not one of your propositions has the

* Du Pin.—The papal advocates have not hesitated to ascribe this rebellion of the fanatics to Luther himself; exclaiming, "This is the fruit of the new doctrine! this is the fruit of Luther's Gospel!"—Gerdes. II. 136. Scult. 239.

† See the Appendix to Vol. IV. of Luther's Life.

least relation to any part of the Gospel; they all tend to promote a merely secular freedom: whereas the Gospel does not treat of these subjects, but describes our passage through this world as attended with afflictions, and as calling for patience, contempt of riches, and even of life itself. What then have ye to do with the Gospel, except that ye use it as a pretext to cover your unchristian purposes?" CENT. XVI.

Such was the reputation of the Saxon divine, that the rustic insurgents would gladly have obtained his countenance to their proceedings; and for this end they had both requested his advice, and appealed to his impartiality respecting the justice of their cause: moreover, that they might the more effectually secure his patronage, they stated their primary requisition to be,—the entire privilege of choosing or removing their ministers, in order that they might have the pure Gospel preached to them without human mixtures and traditions. These artful rioters imagined, that no topic, more than that which concerned the free election of preachers, was likely to interest and rouse the spirit of Luther, who himself had long been struggling for the maintenance of Christian liberty at the hazard of his life.

Nothing but downright plain-dealing could have extricated our reformer and his cause from the snares and dangers of the present critical moment.—Deeply sensible of this, Luther proceeds thus:

"I allow that those rulers, who oppress their subjects in various ways, and particularly in excluding the preaching of the Gospel from among them, are without excuse; nevertheless, it is at the peril of the loss of both your souls and bodies, if ye do not preserve a good conscience in this matter. Satan at this time has raised up a number of seditious, sanguinary teachers; therefore I entreat you not to believe every thing you hear. Ye call yourselves Christians, and profess to be obedient to the laws of God. In the first place, it is extremely improbable that true

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Christians should be so numerous as to furnish such large bodies of men as ye pretend to have on your side. A true Christian is a scarce bird in the world. I would that the major part of men were but sober, and honest moralists! Secondly, Take care, and do not abuse the name of God; for as easily as he drowned the whole world, and rained fire upon Sodom, he can destroy you. Your actions make it very plain to me that your profession of obedience to the law of God is a pretence. St. Paul orders all men, without exception, to obey the magistrate; whereas ye would snatch the sword from him, and resist the power which is ordained of God. Moreover, the duty of the Christian in general is to suffer, to bear the cross, and not to revenge or have recourse to arms. What appearance is there of this humble spirit in your conduct? Our Lord forbade Peter to resist; and when nailed to the cross, he patiently committed his cause to God the Father, and prayed for his murderers. Do ye imitate his example, or pretend not to the character of a Christian. Ye intend to carry your points by force of arms; but ye will not succeed.

"Permit me to say a word concerning my own conduct. The pope, the emperor, and all the world were in a rage against me; and the more they raged, the greater was the progress of my doctrine. Yet I did not take a single violent step,—never said or wrote a syllable of an inflammatory tendency; much less did I draw the sword. Ever in my writings I defended all legal authority, even that of persecuting princes. I trusted solely in God; and he has not only prospered my labours abundantly, but, to the great astonishment of many, I myself am alive at this day, very much against the wish of the Roman pontiff and many other enemies. YOUR warlike modes of proceeding are calculated to produce quite different effects. I pray God to prevent the execution of your designs. I see Satan's meaning, and my

own danger: he is aiming to take away my life; he is aiming to effect by a sanguinary faction, what he has hitherto attempted in vain by the papal agents; but God will continue to preserve me. I say further, Satan, the enemy of mankind, would gladly bring into disgrace the late revival of pure doctrine among the people, by insinuating as though it could not be of God, because the profession of it had caused so much sedition and tumult; and thus your unchristian conduct affords a great handle to the adversary. CENT. XVI.

"Compel me not, I beseech you, to pray against you; for I doubt not but God will hear my prayers: whereas YE can have no heart for prayer. Scripture and your own consciences tell you, your attempts are profane and impious. In fact, ye do not pray; your hope is in your numbers and your arms.

"In regard to your first requisition, the privilege of choosing your ministers, it is utterly inadmissible in all cases where the right of patronage belongs to your governors.

"I admit that magistrates do many unreasonable and many wicked things. Some of YOUR requisitions also are extremely unreasonable and unscriptural; but were they in all respects perfectly unexceptionable, yet this wicked endeavour to extort them by force of arms will, I tell you, if persevered in, bring down upon you the heavy wrath of God both in this world and the next.—The divine rule is express: you must never go beyond PETITION and REPRESENTATION; and if you are persecuted, you must fly from one place to another*."

Our author then turns to the princes and nobility, and addresses them with the zeal and authority of an apostle:—"It is to you, rulers, and you only, especially the rulers of the church, that the present disturbances are to be ascribed. The bishops, to this very moment, even against their better knowledge,

* Matt. x.

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persecute the Gospel; and the civil magistrates think of nothing but draining the wretched poor, to satisfy their own pride and luxury. I have repeatedly warned you of the dreadful evils that threaten you, but to no purpose. The wrath of God is accumulating over you, and will burst on your heads if ye repent not. These false prophets, and this rebellion of the common people, are proofs of the Divine displeasure. To be plain, such is the state of things, that men neither can, nor will, nor indeed should they, bear your government any longer. Listen to the Scriptures, and amend your ways. The insurgents may not succeed at present, and you may kill the greater part of them; but God will raise up others after them. For it is HE himself who, for your wickedness, brings these troubles upon you. Some of you have boasted, that you were ready to sacrifice your rank and fortune, if you could but abolish Lutheranism, root and branch: and others, to fill up the measure of their crimes, and bring fresh disgrace upon the Gospel, represent these seditious tumults as the consequence of my doctrine. Thus do you harden your hearts; thus do you calumniate and persecute the word of God.

"Yourselves are my witnesses that I have always detested sedition, and exhorted the people to obedience, and even to patient submission under your tyrannical government. It is not I, therefore, it is these bloody prophets, who are quite as inimical to me as they are to you, who have been the cause of this rebellion, and who have been seducing the people for more than three years, without any one person, except myself, endeavouring to counteract them. Now if, for your wickedness, it should please God to permit Satan, through the instrumentality of these preachers, to raise this impending storm to such a pitch as is beyond my power of allaying it, what blame, I pray, can you lay to the charge of the Gospel, or of Luther, who has constantly

honoured your authority, exhorted the people to respect you, poured out his prayers to God for you, and himself hitherto patiently endured your cruel persecution? Were I actuated by a spirit of revenge, I might smile in private at these tragical scenes: or I might stimulate the enraged populace, and add fuel to the flames. CENT. XVI.

"Let me entreat ye then, O ye princes, not to despise my advice. Do not fear the rebels, but fear God. Our crimes are such as ought to alarm us; and if God should purpose to deal with us according to our deserts, we cannot escape HIS vengeance, however small the number of the rebels should prove. Great moderation is the line of conduct which ye ought to pursue at the present crisis. Lenity and clemency can do no harm, and may prevent matters from being pushed to extremities,—in one word, may prevent a conflagration, which might consume all Germany.

"It is very true that the demands of the malcontents originate in interested motives; nevertheless some of them are so reasonable, that you ought to be ashamed of having reduced your subjects to the necessity of making them. Their first requisition, which respects the legal appointment of evangelical preachers, is so far just in its principles that no ruler has a right to withhold the Gospel from his subjects: and though I grant, that in the application of this principle they manifest a selfish spirit, and set up claims which under the pretence of liberality would annihilate the power of their masters, yet their iniquitous demands will not justify you in refusing them substantial justice. It is the duty of governors not to vex and distress their subjects, but to be the guardians of their fortunes and their comforts; whereas, in truth, the oppression of the poor peasants of this country is become intolerable, the numerous and heavy imposts cramp their industry, and there is but one way left of meliorating their

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condition,—the higher orders must restrain their excessive luxury and extravagance, which is the true cause of the evil."

Lastly, when Luther had finished these distinct harangues both to the higher and lower orders of the people, he thought proper to conclude with a few words of serious advice to the parties in common. He exhorted them not to think of deciding their disputes by arms, for both sides had a bad cause to defend. It was hard to say whether tyranny or sedition produced worse consequences; no man could fight for either with a good conscience; and those who perished in such a contest would die in their sins. "My advice," says he, "is, that all the disputable points be settled by impartial arbiters chosen on both sides. Let the rulers and nobles concede something of their strict rights, and let the common people in their turn be more moderate in their demands, and listen to the voice of reason; otherwise this civil war will assuredly be the ruin of the country. But if this advice is despised, if the people will wage war against their rulers as so many tyrants and oppressors, and the rulers will treat their subjects as banditti and barbarians, I humbly pray God either to confound the designs of both parties, or in some way to overrule this ferocious obstinacy of men to the re-establishment of peace and harmony."

But these Christian exhortations proved ineffectual. The civil war not only continued, but soon became bloody and destructive. In Suabia, Franconia, and Alsace, the fanatical insurgents pulled down monasteries, castles, and houses, and murdered the nobles and dignitaries, and were guilty of multiplied acts of treason and barbarity. The moment Luther became acquainted with these abominable excesses, he deemed it the duty of a sound Christian to support the lawful government of his country with all his might in an emergency which threatened universal

anarchy and devastation. Accordingly, he changed his language, wrote a short tract AGAINST THE ROBBERS AND MURDERERS, and exhorted all ranks and orders to come forward and help, as they would to extinguish a general conflagration. "The wicked parricides," said he, "must be crushed. They had scandalously broken their oaths, plundered the right owners of their possessions, and committed treason in various ways; and, what very much increased their guilt, they endeavoured to cloke their shameful practices under the name and character of pure Christianity. There could not be greater pests of society. Those indeed among them who had been compelled to join the faction by threats were to be treated with lenity, but those only who repented and surrendered themselves ought to be pardoned. The rest merited the utmost rigour; and whosoever should fall in opposing them, and defending their lawful rulers, ought to be esteemed as martyrs in an excellent cause *."

This publication of Luther was blamed by many as too harsh and violent. But the author, in reply, defended his positions with great spirit and ability. He complained, that whatever he did or said was sure to afford matter for censure to haughty critics. He contended, that those who could excuse the present offenders, must be considered as partakers in their crimes. Lastly, he alleged St. Paul's peremptory judgment of those who resist lawful magistrates †; and strenuously insisted on this rebellion of the rustics as being marked with peculiar circumstances of cruelty and impiety.

To relate all the particulars of the rebellion in 1525 would be foreign to our purpose; it may be sufficient to add, that the princes of the empire found it absolutely necessary to unite their forces

* Sleidan. Gnodalius. Maimbourg. Comment de Luth.
† Romans xiii.

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and their efforts for the suppression and punishment of the insurgents. The carnage in various parts of Germany was dreadful. A vast multitude of the faction in Thuringia were met by the Saxon and other confederate princes near Mulhausen, where they were defeated in a pitched battle, and Munzer their ringleader was also taken and put to death.

Battle of Mulhausen. A. D. 1525.

This unfortunate war is supposed to have cost Germany the lives of more than fifty thousand men*: but the papal advocates are not to be credited when they assert that one hundred and thirty thousand Lutherans perished from this cause. The fact is, by far the greatest tragedies were exhibited in the POPISH part of Germany: moreover, the Lutherans abounded most in the electorate of Saxony, where matters were certainly carried on with greater mildness and moderation, as well by the rebels themselves during the commotions, as by the government in their measures to suppress them. It well deserves notice, that the tumults were the greatest in those districts where the free course of the Gospel had been most completely obstructed. The good elector Frederic adverted to this circumstance in a memorable letter written to his brother and successor on the very day before he died.

"The princes," says he, "have applied to us for our assistance against the peasants; and I could wish to open my mind to them, but I am too ill. Perhaps the principal cause of these commotions is, that these poor creatures have not been allowed to have the word of God preached freely among them."

LUTHER AND CAROLSTADT.

WITH this detail of circumstances in view, the student of the History of the Church of Christ will be much better enabled to trace and to appreciate the

* Beausobre.

motives of the conduct of the great German reformer, both in the rustic war and in the Sacramental contest with Carolstadt. CENT. XVI.

He will be convinced how truly Christian were his notions of submission to magistrates, and how complete his aversion to sedition of every kind.

He will understand also how almost impossible it must have been for Luther to separate entirely the spirit of Carolstadt from that of those rustic insurgents who were headed by Munzer. These appear to have been fanatics of the very worst class; and there is no denying that Carolstadt was connected with them, and strongly tinctured with their enthusiastic notions: and though nothing could be more unjust than to represent the outrages of the peasants as the genuine fruit of Lutheranism, when before Luther's time, there had already been several alarming seditions in Germany, and when many even of the rebels in 1525 made not the least pretensions to religion, yet certainly it became our reformer, at so critical a conjuncture, to be scrupulously explicit in his advice and his exhortations. He was well aware of the malignity of his adversaries, who were insidiously watching his conduct, and were ready, whatever part he should take, to misrepresent his motives: he saw the handle afforded by the riotous enthusiasts for disgracing the late revival of religion; and he was not a little vexed and irritated to see his old associate Carolstadt give so much countenance to men of romantic and dangerous principles. Further; how Luther, in the former part of the RUSTIC REBELLION, could have conducted himself with greater moderation, or have given better advice to the parties concerned, it may not be easy to conceive: and the same may be said of the wisdom and firmness with which, toward the conclusion of that melancholy scene, he supported the legitimate institutions and government of his country.

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But, in regard to the Sacramentarian contest, we have seen that the best friends of this great man must in some parts of that unhappy dissension be compelled entirely to withhold, and in others very much qualify their commendations. The sentiment of his antagonists in this dispute he very unbecomingly denominates, more than once, the poison of Carolstadt; says it was spreading at a great rate; and expresses much concern, that the people of Strasburg, that Zuingle, Leo Judæ, and all the Protestant part of Switzerland, were receiving the new Sacramentarian tenet. Now if Luther had contented himself with retaining his own opinion, which he might have done without the least prejudice to his religious affections,—and if he had cheerfully given the right hand of fellowship to men no less sound in the faith than himself, and who revered his character most sincerely,—the rent of the Protestant churches might have been entirely avoided, and even the difference of judgment itself might have gradually vanished.

Those who would profit by the instructions which history furnishes, will not forget this lamentable instance of heat, error, and obstinacy in Martin Luther.

From what has been said, the intelligent Reader will however be careful not to confound the case of the more solid and judicious Sacramentarians with that of Carolstadt, or any of his fanatical associates among the deluded Anabaptists of those times. By far the greater part of Luther's severe animadversions on the behaviour of Carolstadt appear to have originated in his rooted aversion to the enthusiastic and disorderly spirit of that reformer, which had produced so much tumult and irregularity among the people.—Several of the ecclesiastical historians seem not to have sufficiently adverted to this circumstance. They would represent Luther as having been excessively jealous of the reputation of

Carolstadt as a reformer; and their observations have been repeatedly copied from one another.— In this, as in like cases, the FACTS are our surest guides. CENT. XVI.

1. So early as even the year 1515, the troublesome, contentious temper of this man had begun to show itself; insomuch, that the rector of the university of Wittemberg complained to the elector, That every body avoided the conversation of so quarrelsome a person; That the chapter of Wittemberg had decided against him in a question respecting a petty debt of twelve florins, and he had loaded his judges with abuse, and appealed to the pope;—and lastly, That without leave, or providing a deputy, he had gone away, and deserted his academical duties. Conduct of Carolstadt so early as A. D. 1515.

2. When, by the express command of the Elector, he had returned to Wittemberg, he made himself minister of the parish of Orlamund without any regular appointment *.

3. In 1521, Luther writes thus to his friend: "There is much genius and learning in the writings of Carolstadt, but I wish they contained clearer arguments. I would have him confute the papistical notion of celibacy by such scriptures as are apt and decisive, and not by such as the adversary can easily answer. His cause is excellent, and his attempts laudable; but he should rely on proofs that are unanswerable. To persuade numbers of unmarried persons, by quoting doubtful passages of Scripture, to enter into the married state, must be very dangerous work, and likely to produce afterwards much uneasiness of conscience. I endeavour to impress these things on his mind, but all to no purpose †." Luther's opinion of Carolstadt. A. D. 1521.

4. How injurious to the infant Reformation had been the turbulence and precipitation of Carolstadt, and with how much wisdom and moderation was peace and good order restored by Luther to the

* Acta Vin. S. 199. † Ep. 240 and 241.

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university and inhabitants of Wittemberg, has already appeared in the course of this narrative *. But there are not wanting further proofs of the exercise of a truly humble and Christian spirit in Luther, during his controversies with this rash and impetuous sectarian.

Luther was so much afraid of the mischiefs which would arise to the Gospel from a publication of the internal discords existing among the Protestants, that soon after his return to Wittemberg from his Patmos, when he had put a stop to Carolstadt's innovations, he says, "This very day I entreated Carolstadt in the most suppliant manner not to make any public attack upon me; otherwise I should be compelled, much against my will, to enter the lists with him in good earnest. The man almost called heaven to witness that he had no such intention; yet I learn from other quarters that there are a number of his tracts at this very moment in the hands of the rector of the academy and the other judges. They are endeavouring to make him recant, or at least to suppress his intended publication. This is a point which I do not press; for I neither fear Satan himself, nor an angel from heaven—much less Carolstadt.---Pray that the Gospel may be glorified—and may Christ preserve our prince a little longer! This is my daily petition †."

5. The very candid and accurate Seckendorf observes, that the account of Luther's conference with Carolstadt at Jene and Orlamund ‡ is penned with a malignant artifice, to the great disadvantage of the former. The Orlamundians are there represented as having defended Carolstadt's practice of pulling down images with so much ability, that Luther went away almost confounded by their arguments §. Carolstadt, on the contrary, in the same narrative,

* Pages 33 and 69 of this volume.

† Ep. II. 63. This letter to Spalatinus is not given by Seckendorf.

‡ Page 302. § Scultet.

is said to have treated Luther with kindness and respect; and to have earnestly requested, that, if mistaken, he might be better informed, and set right on the points in dispute. Those who dislike Luther, and are fond of Carolstadt, lay great stress on this statement*. But Luther's friends will not be sorry to find that he did not always take fire, even when very ill treated. "Martin Reinhard," says he to Amsdorf, "has edited a most iniquitous representation of my conduct at Orlamund, with a view to enhance the credit of Carolstadt, and to disgrace me. Now as the great cause will be in no way benefited by my answering him, I shall remain silent, lest I should endeavour to increase my own reputation, and lessen that of Carolstadt†." CENT. XVI.

In another letter on the same subject, he says, "This little account of my transactions at Jene and Orlamund diverts me exceedingly;—and with good reason, because I see that men, who pay no regard to truth, and are without conscience, are full of fears for themselves, and choose to be beforehand with the public, so as to secure their first hearing, and make an impression favourable to themselves, and injurious to me. An anonymous publication, in which there is such a mixture of lies with truth, calls for patience and forbearance, and not for any answer, lest I should seem either to be influenced by a thirst of glory or revenge; or to have given up the grand cause of contention, and to be only anxious for the defence of my own private character‡."

One cannot but be astonished, that, with these testimonies before the public, such a writer as Rodolph Hospinian should affirm, that though

* Martin Reinhard, a preacher at Jene, and of Carolstadt's party, first edited this report of what passed at Jene and Orlamund; afterwards the substance of his little work seems to have found its way into the German folios of Luther's works. —Reinhard was ordered to leave the place.

† Ep. II. 237. ‡ Ib. 234.

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Luther himself did not write that account of his conference with Carolstadt which is published in the German editions of his works, the truth of it nevertheless is not to be doubted. "For," continues he, "on the same principle you may doubt the truth of the Old and New Testament, and of other public records. Moreover, the narrative was inserted in Luther's works while he was alive, and HE NEVER OBJECTED TO IT *."

Also the learned translator of Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History appears to me to have imbibed, from the same Hospinian, most unwarrantable prejudices against Luther in regard to his unfortunate rupture with Carolstadt. He makes Luther say, "As in red-hot iron two distinct substances, viz. iron and fire, are united, so is the body of Christ joined with the bread in the Eucharist †." Maclaine calls this a miserable comparison; and is so fond of finding fault with Luther for using it, that in p. 165 he again ridicules him for explaining the "nonsensical doctrine of consubstantiation" by the similitude of a red-hot iron, &c. But he does not refer us to the passage in Luther's voluminous writings. However at length, in the tract called the Babylonish Captivity, I found the following sentence: "Why may not Christ comprehend his own body within the substance of the bread, as is the case with accidents? Behold, the two substances, iron and fire, are so mingled in ignited iron, that every part is iron and fire. Why then, much more, may not the glorious body of Christ exist in every part of the substance of the bread?" Thus Luther puts the question interrogatively and modestly, according to my judgment, and in a manner much less positive and much less exceptionable than it is stated in Maclaine's translation.—Whenever authors find fault with one another, they ought to be very exact in their quotations.

* Hist. Sacram. II. p. 32. † P. 34, 4to Ed.

In Luther's little treatise against Henry VIII. king of England, I observe the author again alludes to the similitude of ignited iron. "I may," says he, "be allowed to say, the body of Christ is in the Sacrament, as fire is in the iron, without destroying the substance of that metal; and as God is in the man Jesus Christ without destroying the properties of a man. In both these mixtures each substance retains its peculiar nature, and yet do they constitute but ONE THING. I may be allowed, I say, to speak in this way, till the papists shall confute me by weighty arguments, and not by contemptuously quoting Thomas Aquinas."—However, unprejudiced persons will probably deem this to be quite as intelligible as Beausobre's objections to it, grounded on the abstruse metaphysical doctrine of the penetration of bodies*. Moreover, they will do well to recollect that this passage of Luther was written in 1522, and the former in 1520; and lastly, that even in much more modern times there is frequently to be observed, among the controversial disputations respecting both Con and Tran-substantiation, a profusion of rash assertion and inconclusive argument on the Protestant, as well as on the opposite side of those questions.

It may not be amiss to conclude this curious and instructive portion of the history of the Reformation with a Character of Carolstadt, drawn by the impartial pen of the mild and cautious Melancthon.

Character of Carolstadt, by Melancthon.

"Carolstadt," says he, "first raised the tumult respecting the Sacrament. He was a man of a savage disposition, and of no genius or learning, or even of common sense; a man who was so far from having any marks of being influenced by the Holy Spirit, that I could never observe him either to understand or practise even the ordinary duties of

* I. 315.

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humanity. Nay, he has discovered manifest marks of an unholy turn of mind: all his notions savour of sedition and of Judaism. He rejected every law made by the Gentiles, and contended, that forensic questions ought to be decided by the law of Moses; so little did he comprehend the force and nature of Christian liberty. From the very first, he embraced with his whole might the fanatical doctrine of the Anabaptists, when Nicholas Storck attempted to sow the seeds of it in Germany; and he made a stir respecting the Sacrament,* entirely from a dislike to Luther, and not in the least from any pious conviction that he himself was in the right. For when Luther had expressed his disapprobation of Carolstadt's indiscreet zeal in breaking and pulling down the images and statues *, he was so inflamed with a monstrous spirit of revenge, that he began to look out for some plausible plan for ruining the reputation of Luther. A great part of Germany can testify that I speak nothing but the truth. And if there was need of proof, his own publications would be my most decisive witnesses against their author. There is not in them even the specious appearance of a probable argument, that should have induced the man to take up his pen. With how jocose and trifling a spirit does he treat of the Greek word τοῦτο †? Then, has he thrown any light whatever on a point of so much importance in the

* If this be so, what are we to think of Maclaine, who would represent the removal of the images out of the churches as effected by Carolstadt, in conjunction with Melancthon himself and others? See his note, p. 165, Vol. II. 4to. All this contradiction is set right at once, by considering, that Carolstadt, besides his legal endeavours to reform the Church from popery, in which endeavours Melancthon, Bugenhagius, Jonas, and others certainly concurred, excited the people to sedition and tumult, encouraged them to remove the images by force, and did many other acts of violence.—This was the blamable part of his conduct, and seems entirely forgotten by those who would favour him, to the disparagement of Luther. See p. 38 of this Vol.

† THIS is my body.

history of the ancient Church? or what testimony has he produced from any celebrated author? or, lastly, what single expression is there in his whole disputation that indicates a pious way of thinking? He only vociferates, as do the lowest mechanics, who, in their cups, are pleased with nothing but profane tales. Moreover, a great part of his writings are taken up with railing; and yet the stupid author would pass for a man of wit and humour."

Melancthon concludes this picture with saying,

"I have written this for the sake of my neighbours, that, if they have the least regard for my testimony, they may beware of such a character. For though it is not in his power to disguise his real disposition for a long time together, yet he has a surprisingly fair outside, and possesses the arts of insinuation to a wonderful degree. But his temper is violent and restless, and soon breaks out into acts of ambition, passion, and envy *."

The learned reader, who knows how to appreciate the testimony of Melancthon, and who remembers that that Reformer was an eye-witness of the practices of Carolstadt, will not hesitate to pronounce this evidence as entirely conclusive. He may however very much wonder that Maclaine should positively assert †, in contradiction to Mosheim himself, that the true cause of the violent rupture between Luther and Carolstadt was their difference of opinion concerning the Eucharist; whereas Melancthon's account of the origin of the Sacramentarian controversy tallies exactly with the facts. Carolstadt, before that unhappy contest commenced, had shown his proneness to turbulence and fanaticism. He may wonder likewise that Beausobre should warn his reader not to confound Carolstadt with the fanatics, and assert, that "Luther

* Epist. ad Fred. Mycon. in Hospin. † P. 165, 4to.

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from pure prejudice*, reckons him among that class." Nothing can be more unjust than this charge. For if the writer only means that Carolstadt is not to be confounded with the rebel fanatics who were headed by Munzer, Luther, as we have seen, makes the very distinction himself†; but if he would have us believe that Carolstadt was not an enthusiast, he contradicts the universal voice of the contemporary historians. It was with great difficulty that I obtained from the continent a copy of Beausobre's History of the Reformation, and I confess I have been greatly disappointed in the perusal of it. In many instances the author appears to me by no means to have been directed by the original documents.

There runs through all those writers on the Reformation, who would mitigate the irregularities of Carolstadt, and blame the severity of Luther, this palpable inadvertency: they forget that Luther's chief complaints against his coadjutor were not so much on account of his innovations at Wittemberg, as the precipitate, turbulent, and seditious MANNER in which he effected them. The observations of Luther on this subject‡ are as distinct and rational, as those of Maclaine and Beausobre are frequently irrelevant, and unfounded. Where, one may ask, does Luther find fault with Carolstadt for making any changes which were approved and authorized by the elector and the regular government of the country§? And, in regard to the invidious charge, so repeatedly insinuated by these and other writers, of JEALOUSY in Luther, lest any other person besides himself should seem to be the principal reformer, no more need be said, than that those who can think Carolstadt to have been an object capable of exciting Luther's envy, or robbing him of his

* Par pure prevention.
† Page 212.
‡ P. 66 of this Vol.
§ Maclaine in Mosheim, p. 165.

glory, must be little acquainted with the authentic memoirs of those times. The Leipsic disputation alone, one would think, might have settled this point, even though Melancthon had not recorded in such decisive terms his opinion of the talents and disposition of Carolstadt. CENT. XVI.

If, after this full discussion of the grounds of the dissension between these two early reformers, the inquisitive student should still be perplexed or dissatisfied with the many seemingly contradictory assertions, which he may meet with on this subject, in the writings of some excellent men and useful memorialists, I would briefly suggest several considerations, which may assist in relieving this unpleasant state of mental suspense and uncertainty. 1. The obstinacy of Luther, respecting the Sacramental tenet of Con-substantiation, produced a permanent and lamentable rent among the Protestants. Carolstadt had broached the true doctrine of the Sacrament, but had defended it in the absurd and ridiculous manner represented by Melancthon. By and by, men of great talents, as Zuingle, Bucer, Ecolampadius, and others, appeared on the same side, and supported their system with a rational, perspicuous, and well-digested argumentation. This circumstance laid the foundation of a close connexion between Carolstadt and the Zuinglians. Nothing could be more natural than that Carolstadt should be pleased to have found such able defenders of the tenet which he himself had first advanced, or that the Helvetian divines should gladly receive into their communion an unfortunate sectarian of the same principles with themselves, who was disliked, and almost abandoned by his old associates. In a word, party-spirit, absolutely exclusive of what is right or what is wrong, will, in this case, as in many others of a similar kind, account for mild and kind expressions on the one hand, and also for harsh and severe judgments on the other,

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according to the wishes, prejudices, and connexions of the writers.

2. There is good reason to hope that Carolstadt profited by adversity, and became more truly Christian in his temper, during the latter part of his life *. This single hint will assist us in reconciling some of the most opposite representations of the character of this reformer. "Carolstadt," says his friend Bucer writing to Zuingle in the year 1530, "was formerly inclined to be somewhat savage; but daily persecutions and heavy misfortunes have so broken his spirit, and the man has now such worthy notions of Christ, that I feel confident you will admire him †."—At the same time, I cannot but observe a striking instance of party-spirit in this very kind letter itself of Bucer to Zuingle. At the moment when he would represent the savage temper of Carolstadt as then much softened and corrected by adversity, he speaks of his former defect as a habit that was the natural consequence of having lived so much in the company of the most SAVAGE Luther, and of the incredible successes of the first reformers, which might, he thinks, have rendered insolent any modest man whatsoever.

Bucer's account of Carolstadt, A. D. 1530.

3. Luther also himself, surely, should be allowed, and that without reproach, to have seen several points of doctrine, and some also of practice, in a different light, as he became older, and had had more experience. There is a mass of evidence to prove that this was really so: and some things which have been deemed his greatest and most inexcusable inconsistencies, are instantly and satisfactorily solved by this consideration.

* Carolstadt was certainly a man of reading, and of a lively imagination; and, as certainly, violent, void of solidity, and prone to enthusiasm. His recantation does no honour to his memory; yet, on the whole, I am very unwilling to withdraw the appellation of "Honest Carolstadt." See p. 33. of this Vol. at the bottom.

† Hotting. Eccl. Hist. Vol. VIII. p. 253.

There is a confused story respecting Luther, which states, that a very little time before his death, he owned to Melancthon that they had gone too far in the Sacramentarian controversy. Melancthon also, from prudential motives, it is said, suppressed this concession during his own lifetime, and intended to have recorded it in his last will; but deferred the doing so, till, from weakness, he was incapable of directing his pen. It is a part of the same story, that when Melancthon proposed to Luther to explain in writing their sentiments on the Sacrament, expressed in temperate language, the latter answered, "he should thereby render all his doctrine suspected*." CENT. XVI.

This whole account is, in my judgment, supported by very suspicious and insufficient evidence; and the declarations which are said to have taken place in the conversation, must, in every view of them, be deemed altogether too indefinite and obscure to be the foundation of any solid conclusion whatsoever.

Still it MAY be true, that expressions, not very unlike those just mentioned, were used; and I think it very probable, and hope IT IS TRUE, that Luther, a man of so vehement a temper, and so much harassed with controversies, did not only ONCE, but OFTEN, in his cooler moments, acknowledge, "that he had gone too far on various occasions."

It may even be true, that at a time so very near his death, he might allude particularly to some parts of his conduct in the Sacramentarian controversy, which, on a review, he disapproved; and yet, in his present feeble state, he might not think himself capable of furnishing the public with such a full and satisfactory explanation as would sufficiently guard against all dangerous conclusion or misconstruction. But these positions, to whatever height of probability they may rise in the minds of some, will, in the apprehension of others, dwindle

* Histor. Sac. pars altera, 202.

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into mere conjectures; and ought, therefore, never to be insisted on as grounds of argument. It is well known, that slight alterations of words have often very important effects on the meaning of sentences. Let us be careful how we credit posthumous narratives, especially when brought forward by heated and interested partisans.

As I revere the memory of Luther, I sincerely lament that his strong understanding should have failed to grasp the true Scriptural idea of the Eucharist in all its parts; but I am not disposed to admit, on slight testimony, that he discovered his error of consubstantiation, but was too proud to own it.—A native courage and ingenuousness of temper, ever urging him, regardless of consequences, to a conscientious avowal of whatever he firmly believed, is an ingredient so thoroughly established in the composition of Luther, that even plausible suppositions and representations, if inconsistent with his general character, and not well substantiated by the unbending rules of historical evidence, will always be rejected by men of dispassionate judgments.

It is astonishing, however, with how much alacrity the story which we have just related has been repeatedly insisted on, to the disparagement of Luther's reputation. Melchior Adam just mentions the thing *, in a very proper manner, without laying any stress on it; thus, "There are who affirm," &c. &c. But Beausobre, with a most unwarrantable positiveness, treats the relation not only as a settled and an allowed truth, but also as altogether conclusive against the candour and ingenuousness of Luther. This author goes even further, and affirms, that Leo Judæ † has proved, in an unanswerable little treatise, that, before the disputes had arisen concerning the Sacrament, both Luther and Erasmus leaned to the sentiments of the Zuinglians.

* Vita Luth. † A Swiss divine.

This rash and unfounded assertion is introduced in such a way as very much to mislead even a cautious reader *. The fact is, both Luther and Erasmus had maintained, that the faithful communicant in the Lord's Supper, is, IN A SPIRITUAL SENSE, a partaker of the body and blood of Christ; and on this practical doctrine are to be found very excellent observations in Luther's writings †.

To press home this fact upon Luther and Erasmus, and to show how nearly they agreed with their adversaries, was the express design of Leo Judæ's publication; and the author, in regard to the spiritual communion of the body and blood of Christ, fully proved his point: and for this reason, namely, because the fact was true: but it was impossible he should do more. It was impossible he could prove, because it was not true, that, BESIDES the doctrine of spiritually eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ, Luther and Erasmus did not also hold the gross and unscriptural tenet of the real presence of the human body of Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist.

Erasmus was so much enraged at this charge of heresy, that he calls God to witness, in the most solemn manner, "if ever, even secretly in his heart, he had held any opinion on the Lord's Supper contrary to the judgment of the Roman-catholic church." He says, he is willing to be esteemed the prince of heretics, if a single passage to that effect can be produced from any of his publications; and he accuses the writer of having quoted and misrepresented some of his expressions, in a most unfair and most impudent manner ‡.

Leo Judæ, and also Conrad Pellican, another Swiss divine, had certainly concluded too hastily, that, because Luther and Erasmus had maintained the necessity of partaking of the body and blood

* Beausobre, p. 125. Note. † Comment. Luth. II. ix.

‡ Ep. Erasm. p. 935.

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of Christ in a SPIRITUAL sense, they had therefore abandoned the more common and literal interpretation of the words of Scripture *.

In a letter of Luther's to Spalatinus †, I find he acknowledges that he had been extremely TEMPTED to embrace what he calls THE ERROR of his adversaries the Sacramentarians; and this entirely agrees with what he wrote to the Strasburgians, p. 201. Excessive veneration for the word of God, taken according to its literal meaning, "This is my body," was indisputably the chief cause which prevented Luther from successfully exercising his judgment to obtain a rational interpretation of the meaning of Scripture in this instance. This great man, however, seems but ill requitted for making such candid concessions respecting the secret struggles of his mind, when these are produced against him, and represented as the effects of pride, obstinacy, and worldly policy ‡.

This collection and arrangement of facts, respecting, 1stly, The Civil War of the peasants of Germany; and 2dly, The Dissensions of Luther and Carolstadt, cannot fail to prove useful to the diligent student of the history of the Reformation. And in regard to the observations which accompany the facts, these are entirely the result of the writer's reflection, during the exercise of that care and patience which he found necessary for the exhibition of them in a clear and comprehensive manner. Before he entered on the task, he had neither any strong nor very distinct opinion on the merits of the leading characters in these transactions; or rather, he per-

* See Erasmus's expostulations with Conrad Pellican, Ep. p. 963, Pellican's answer in Scult. pp. 57 and 61.—It must be owned that Pellican in this controversy was reduced to the necessity of saying, "That in the matter of the Lord's Supper, Erasmus had laid the CHIEF, if not the ONLY stress on the SPIRITUAL meaning." Jortin Er. p. 405.

† Ep. 269. ‡ Beausobre, 125.

haps leaned to that common notion, which would represent Luther as proud, wilful, and domineering. In the course of his inquiry, he could not but take notice, that almost always where Carolstadt is either commended by authors, or spoken of with a sort of candid propensity to mitigate his faults, it is but too apparent that this is done with an indirect design to injure Luther's reputation. This circumstance certainly very much excited both the writer's attention and his suspicion. His observations, however, it is scarcely necessary to add, are of no further value than as they are found to agree with the FACTS; and these being now fairly before the reader, he will himself be able to appreciate the justice and propriety of the observations. This he could not so easily have done before, on account of the partial, scattered, and indigested manner in which the historical materials have been transmitted to posterity*.

THE DEATH OF THE ELECTOR OF SAXONY.

THE good elector of Saxony departed this life on the fifth of May 1525†, about ten days before the defeat of Munzer, the leader of the rustic insurgents. He was too feeble in body, and too deeply concerned in mind, to make any attempt at joining the confederate princes. Only three days before his death, he exhorted, by letter, his brother John, who succeeded him in the electorate, to do his utmost to compose the disturbances, by choosing arbitrators who were good men and favourites of the people,—to avoid the spilling of blood, to pardon the multitude, and to punish only the ringleaders of the rebellion‡. The delusion, he said, would not last long. God,

* I had once intended to have placed this account of Carolstadt in a different part of the History:—See note, p. 69.—but further reflection convinced me, that the perspicuity of the Lutheran transactions, would be best consulted by the arrangement here adopted.

† Comment de Luth. lib. II. § 11.—4.

‡ Seck. II. pp. 4, 5, 11. Beausobre, III. 186.

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who had hitherto protected their country, would continue to protect it. This was the last time he should be able to write to him, but he trusted they should meet again in a better world.—The mind of this conscientious prince appears to have been strongly impressed with a belief that the primary cause of the rebellion of the peasants was the just judgment of God, on account of the obstruction which the preaching of the pure Gospel had met with; and, as a secondary cause, he lamented, that not only the ruling clergy, but also the civil governors, oppressed their poor subjects in a variety of ways. Unable now to direct his pen, he dictated, on the day before his death, to his brother John, the letter alluded to in page 224, in which these pious and compassionate feelings are depicted in the most lively colours. In particular, he tells him he would do well to repeal a late heavy impost on beer and wine *. Such a lenient measure would tend to tranquillize the public mind, and induce the malecontents to return to their duty; and a kind Providence would, no doubt, abundantly requite him in some other way. Spalatinus informs us, that, a short time before he expired, he addressed his servants and domestics in the following terms. "I entreat you, my dearest children, in the name of God, and for HIS sake, to forgive me, if I have offended any of you in word or deed; and I further entreat you to make in my name this same request for me to others. We princes are apt to treat our poor distressed subjects in a vexatious and unjustifiable manner." The devout and affectionate expressions of the elector drew tears from Spalatinus and all his domestics who were present.—His last words were, "I cannot say any more." "Does any thing," said Spalatinus, "lie heavy on your mind?" He answered, "No, but I have much

* So early as the year 1519 we find Luther exhorting the elector of Saxony to avoid taxing the beer. Such a measure, he said, would alienate the minds of his subjects.—Archiv. Weimar.

bodily pain."—He expired, however, like one falling asleep. CENT. XVI.

Frederic the Wise died of an obstruction in the bladder, in the sixty-third year of his age. Before the Lutheran controversies, he had been a most industrious collector of reliques, and had augmented the number of masses in his Church of All Saints to ten thousand annually. How zealous a Roman-catholic he was, even in the year 1517, may be collected from certain articles in his will made at that time. He joins with the Holy Trinity, the blessed Virgin, St. Bartholomew the apostle, and then his tutelar angel and all the saints of God, to whose intercession he commits his soul. He particularly enjoins, that, for a month after his death, there be said no less than fifty masses every day, with a small allowance for each. Lastly, he requests his brother John to examine very carefully whether his ministers might not, for the sake of increasing his revenues, have defrauded his subjects in some instances; and if so, to rectify what was wrong, without delay*. The Christian Reader will be pleased to see how, in the LAST will and testament of this prince, the pure doctrine of the Gospel triumphs over the ancient superstition. Not a word in it of the Virgin Mary, of saints, or apostles, or masses. "I beseech," says he, "Almighty God, through the sacred and unexampled merits of his Son, to pardon all my sins and transgressions; neither do I doubt but that, by the precious death of my dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, I shall obtain forgiveness; and therefore into his all-powerful hands, and to his eternal, immeasurable, unsearchable kindness and compassion, I commit my soul, to be preserved for the enjoyment

Frederic, aged 63.

Frederic was a zealous Roman Catholic even in 1517.

* The pious Seckendorf takes notice here that this is a very common article in the last testament of such kings and princes as have had some regard for their salvation; and adds, with great reason, how much better it would be if they took care either to prevent such frauds, or to correct them in their lifetime. P. 23, and 33.

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of a happy immortality. "I freely forgive all who have done me any wrong; and I beseech them, in the name of God, and for His sake, to pardon, from the heart and with a true Christian charity, me in whatever I may have offended them, agreeably to what we every day pray for, the mutual forgiveness of trespasses from God, the Father of compassion." - - - By the advice of Luther and Melancthon, he was buried without pomp, and without superstition. The latter made an oration in Latin; and the former preached in German, from the fourth chapter of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, verses 13—18. His discourse was short, and his praises of the deceased few, modest, and perfectly consistent with truth. On his monument was inscribed an epitaph in Latin, from the elegant pen of Melancthon.

The history of this elector's conduct affords the best interpretation of his principles; and from this it has sufficiently appeared, that for a long time he had IN SECRET favoured the progress of Lutheranism. His cautious temper, his superstitious habits, the novel and decisive measures of Luther, and, lastly, the intrigues of the pope, the emperor, and the confederate anti-protestant princes, all these contributed to make him less active in the support of the reformers than might have been expected from his good understanding and respect for the word of God. He had however been long convinced how vain it was to look for any efficient accommodation of the ecclesiastical dissensions. The archbishop of Mentz, in the year 1523, had conceived a plan of this sort; in which it was proposed, that himself, the bishop of Mersburg, Luther, and the two dukes of Saxony, or two other princes, should meet at Zerbst or Naumburg, for the purpose of an amicable adjustment. But this, like many other similar projects, came to nothing; and the elector cautioned his brother John against the consequences of undertaking the direc-

A plan of the archbishop of Mentz.

A. D. 1523.

tion of such heterogeneous assemblies*. Moreover, though we have seen that this good prince, in the course of the same year, had reason to apprehend considerable danger both to himself and his electorate, on account of his known attachment to Luther, and his disciples †, yet the wicked machinations of CENT. XVI.

* Comment. de Luth. CXLVIII.

† Besides the just grounds for apprehension of danger to the elector of Saxony, related in pages 123 and 124, it may not be improper to add another not yet mentioned, as it marks, in a very striking manner, the excessive bitterness and animosity of the papal party, and to what lengths of injustice and oppression their hatred of the Reformation could carry them. Francis Sickingen, one of the most powerful noblemen in all the German empire, was a steady patron of Luther and his doctrine; and he, as well as some others,—see p. 465, vol. iv.—had offered the Reformer a safe asylum in the moment of extreme danger: afterwards, Sickingen, who is allowed to have been more actuated by a factious, warlike, and enterprising spirit, than is consistent with the meekness and humility of a Christian, was involved in an unhappy contest with the elector of Treves, in which the parties were joined respectively by allies of great distinction. Whatever was the true cause of this war, whether it arose from the ambitious projects of Sickingen, his hatred of the episcopal tyranny, or from mere points of honour carried by this chief to an improper extreme, it is certain that religion had no concern in it; and, moreover, that Luther constantly, and openly, expressed his entire disapprobation of using force for the purpose of making converts. The courageous efforts of Sickingen terminated in the capture of his castle, the flight of his allies, and the loss of his life by the bursting of a bomb. And now the attentive reader is to mark the consequences. The victorious confederates would probably have been contented with their triumph over Sickingen and his friends, if he had not been a Lutheran; but to be a Lutheran was a crime never to be forgiven. They remained therefore under arms, on the pretence of keeping the public peace. The chiefs of the Suabian league, particularly the princes of the House of Austria and Bavaria, acted in concert with them, to oppress the Lutherans in every quarter. They vowed vengeance against the remains of Sickingen's party, wherever they should find them; and incessantly menaced even the elector of Saxony, whom, without the least proof, they accused of harbouring refugee noblemen in his provinces. All this was levelled against the reformation in religion; and we have seen,—page 172,—that, in the opinion

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his interested, unprincipled neighbours were quickly confounded; the blessed Reformation proceeded most rapidly, and even the temporal affairs of the elector of Saxony suffered no injury whatever. These lessons were not thrown away on Frederic: he became at last convinced, that he had carried his system of connivance and toleration quite far enough; that a Divine hand had directed the late revival of pure Christianity; and that it was now his duty to be actively instrumental in promoting the same glorious cause among his own subjects.—While meditating deeply, in his last sickness, on these things, and despairing of any useful interference of popes and bishops, he gave directions for an interview with Luther, in the intention of consulting how he should in future more openly support and establish the reformed religion in Saxony. But our Reformer was at that time in Thuringia, preaching to the peasants, and endeavouring to appease their rebellious spirit; which prevented him from returning to see the prince, till he was on the point of death. Thus was the elector providentially debarred from holding intercourse with a man whom he certainly revered, but whose company, from motives of policy, he had hitherto shunned during a number of years*. There is however great reason to believe, that he died in the faith, hope, and humility of the Gospel; though it be difficult, or rather impossible, to apologize for his deficiency in the great duty of confessing Christ before all the world†.

* Comment. de Luth. II. VII.

† The elector of Saxony never spoke once to Luther, and never saw him but twice in his life. Seck. Præloq. Also p. 28.

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of the chancellor of Treves, matters were ripening so fast for its destruction, that Lutheranism would quickly receive its death-stroke. Comment. Luth. pp. 111. 130. 223. 224. 259. 261. 269. 289. 290. 291; also Beausobre, I. p. 307. II. p. 270, and 315. III. pp. 20. 24. and 110.

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FROM THE DEATH OF THE ELECTOR OF SAXONY, TO THE CONCLUSION OF LUTHER'S CONTROVERSY WITH ERASMUS.

THE MARRIAGE OF LUTHER.
CONTROVERSY WITH ERASMUS.
CONTINUATION OF THE CONTROVERSY.

ABOUT the latter part of the year 1524, the monastery of Wittemberg was reduced to almost perfect insignificance, by the death or desertion of the monks, which had taken place in the course of a few years. In the month of October there were left in it only the prior and Luther; and the latter availed himself of that opportunity to resign the title and habit of an Augustine Monk, and in future was called merely Doctor or Professor Martin Luther. He had long been desirous of taking this step, but, well knowing the elector's aversion to innovation, he had delayed to press the point. At last he expressed a wish to Spalatinus that he might have the prince's final answer, and he promised never more to importune him on the subject. Frederic, with some humour, and much good nature, sent him a piece of cloth, and told him he was at liberty to wear it in whatever shape he pleased *. CENT. XVI.

The character of the Saxon reformer seems greatly misunderstood. Many persons conceive him, in general, to have been rash and hasty in his conduct;

* Comment de Luth. CLXXVIII.

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mistaking, I think, a few vehement and impetuous expressions in his language, for random, indigested decisions of his understanding. On a close examination of his practice, we shall find that few men have been more patient in investigation, or more deliberate in resolution. He was remarkably so in the very delicate and interesting questions which occurred in the earlier part of the Reformation, respecting the celibacy of the clergy. The first clergyman who married a wife in Saxony, was the curate of Kemberg, named Bartholomew Bernard, in the year 1521. Cardinal Albert, archbishop of Magdeburg, summoned him to appear at Halle, and requested the elector to enjoin episcopal obedience to his subject. But the cautious Frederic, by a dexterous civility, protracted the affair; and in the mean time Melancthon composed for the man a learned defence, addressed to the officials of the ecclesiastical court. The tender conscience of Luther appears to have hesitated longer than even Melancthon himself, respecting the obligation of voluntary monastic vows. At length from his Patmos issued his admirable tract on this subject, which gave a fatal blow to the whole papal system*. He

First marriage of a clergyman in Saxony.

A. D. 1521.

* See page 6 of this Vol. Luther himself is known to have set a high value on this treatise, and to have considered it as the most unanswerable of all that he had ever written.

In our days there is no need to insist much on arguments against celibacy, but it may be worth while to take notice how this acute Reformer keeps his eye constantly on the popish doctrine of the MERIT of works. "There can be no doubt," says he, "but that to break a vow is contrary to the laws of God. We must observe, however, that ONLY such vows can be meant, as are lawful. Now there is neither in Scripture, nor in the history of the primitive church, any precept or example in favour of monastic vows: they are restraints of mere human invention.

"In regard to works, evangelical faith does not set them aside, but directs us not to put our trust in them: It enlightens the conscience, and teaches men the principle on which they are to perform good works; namely, from a real love of doing good to our neighbour, and for the sake of keeping the body in subjection; not from servile fear, or a view to justification. Such

had sent the manuscript to Spalatinus, for the inspection of the elector and his court, and soon after it was not to be found. The author suspected it was purposely detained, to prevent the publication of it. "You could not have vexed me worse," says he to Spalatinus, "if indeed the papers are secreted by you. The circumstances press for their publication; and if either they are lost, or you will not restore them, my mind will be so irritated, that in future I shall plead the same cause with more force and vehemence. You may burn my papers to a cinder, but you cannot extinguish the spirit of the writer*." I find they were not published till January 1522†.

Luther's treatise on Monastic Vows. A. D. 1522.

Through the labours of Luther and his Wittemberg coadjutors, the understandings of men were become so much enlightened, and their prejudices abated, that even Spalatinus himself entered into the married state in the latter part of the year 1525‡. However, he did not venture on this bold step till Luther himself had set him the example a few months before.

Spalatinus marries in A. D. 1525.

Luther was about forty years old when he married Catharine Bore, a virtuous nun of noble parentage. It is astonishing how his enemies exulted upon this occasion. They not only condemned the conduct of them both, with as much confidence as if they could allege that Scripture authority for the monastic state which Protestants can do for the matrimonial, but represented Luther as an infamous, hardened sensualist, who had neither command of his passions, nor regard for his reputation; and his wife as an abandoned strumpet, who had lived in the most licentious manner for more than two years among the young academics.—These foolish and wicked

Luther marries Cath. Bore.

* Ep. I. 253. † Luth. Op. Jen. II. 477.
‡ Amœn. Lit. IV. 427.

works, strictly speaking, are not wrought under the covenant of the law, but of grace; they are the effect of Christ himself working in us by faith, and are therefore as necessary and indispensable as faith itself." Luth. de Vot. Monast. III.

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accusations are effectually refuted by history, which does abundant justice to the moral character of both the parties.

But several of the very best friends of Luther did not think his marriage well timed*. Justus Jonas was so affected with the idea that the Reformation would suffer materially by this event, that he burst into tears the first time he saw his friend in the character of a husband. So he writes to Spalatinus, and adds, "I pray God to bless him abundantly; he is the best and sincerest of men, and our most inestimable father in the Lord†." Melancthon also was aware that the Reformer's conduct, in this instance, would probably give rise to much profane and ill-natured criticism; and that he would be represented as a man of no feeling, now that Saxony was in tears for the loss of Frederic the Wise, and all Germany covered with the slain in the Rustic War.—"But the taunts and revilings of irreligious men," he said, "were to be disregarded.—The man had done nothing that was reprehensible. He was of a lively, social, generous turn of mind, and by nature itself formed for the married state; no wonder, therefore, that he had given way to his innocent inclinations: for as to certain slanderous reports which were in circulation, it was well known that the whole was unfounded calumny." Melancthon then adds, "that though even an opinion of some degree of indiscretion in Luther should prevail, it might have its uses, because an exceedingly high reputation was always a very dangerous thing." However, upon observing that his friend's change of situation had produced in him some unusual marks of gloom and discomposure, he said he omitted no endeavour to console him. Moreover, granting him to have fallen into an error, that circumstance ought not in the least to affect his doctrine. But, he repeated, there was

* Scult. 275. † Amœnitat. IV. 424.

no room for accusation; for he was in possession of the most decisive proofs of his piety and love of God *. CENT. XVI.

Compare these judicious and Christian reflections with the malignant, sarcastic credulity of Erasmus, who acquainted the president of the court of Holland, that "the Lutheran tragedy would end, like the quarrels of princes, in matrimony. A monk has married a nun; and that you may know this marriage was contracted under happy auspices, the lady was brought to bed about fourteen days after the bridal song had been chanted. Now Luther begins to be more mild, and not to write with his accustomed violence. There is nothing which a wife cannot tame." To another person he owned afterwards, that this scandalous report was without foundation; and added, in his usual jocose and sarcastic style, that Luther's wife was now said to be pregnant; but that, in regard to the vulgar notion concerning the birth of Antichrist from the connexion of a monk and a nun, if that were true, the world had at this present time many thousand Antichrists.

After all, Luther's own observations on his marriage are the most satisfactory.

Luther's account of his marriage.

In November 1524, he declares he had then no intention to marry; not that he was either a stone or a log of wood, but because, on account of the reproach of heresy under which he laboured, he expected every day might be his last †. In the May succeeding, for the first time, as far as is known, he expressed his resolution to marry Catharine Bore ‡. On the seventeenth of June he writes thus to his friend Stifelius, a clergyman: "Pray for me, that God may bless and sanctify to me this new mode of life. Some of our wise ones are exceedingly irritated. They are however compelled

* July 21, 1525, to Joach. Gamer. IV. 94.
† Ep. II. 245. ‡ Seck. II. 17.

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to own that marriage is a divine ordinance; but the character* of me and my Catharine is the bug-bear that frightens them out of their senses, and makes them both think and talk profanely. But the Lord lives, and is on my side. He is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do†." The marriage had taken place four days before the date of this letter, and he gives several reasons for the hastiness of the measure‡.

His letter to Spalatinus on his marriage.

A. D. 1525.

1. I have now, says he, stopped the mouths of the calumniators of me and Catharine Bore. You, my Spalatinus, must not only be present at the wedding-dinner, but also endeavour to procure us some venison. Pray that God may bless us. In the opinion of some, I have made myself contemptible; but nevertheless, I trust, angels smile, and demons weep, at what I have done. How inconsistent are these over-wise men, to call that impious and diabolical in me, which in every one else they allow to be a pious and sacred action! Wittemb. June 16, 1525.

2. Providence, in a wonderful manner, and when I was thinking of other things, has suddenly joined me in marriage to C. Bore. June 20.

3. I could not deny my father's earnest request. He is anxious that I should have children. Besides, I judged it right to confirm, by my own example, the doctrine I have taught; for I observe many are still pusillanimous, notwithstanding this great light of the Gospel. I do not pretend to be violently in love, but I have a sincere affection and esteem for my wife. On Tuesday next my parents will be present at the wedding-dinner, and I do intreat you by all means to come. The poor peasants are cut to pieces in every quarter. It is reported that the duke George is so inflated with the successes against them, that he intends to demand my person

* One a Monk, and the other a Nun. † Ep. II. 294.
‡ Jun. 13, Amœn. Lit.

to be given up, conceiving me of the same stamp with Munzer. Christ will defend me *.

4. On the twenty-ninth of the succeeding September, he writes thus to the same Stifelius. "If it was really agreeable to the will of God that I should marry, what wonder is it that my conduct should not harmonize with carnal views and sentiments? If the world were not offended with me, I should have reason to suspect I had not supported the Christian character. Worldly men were offended even with God manifested in the flesh. OUR two princes confess and support the Gospel openly †. We have resigned the revenues of the monastery to the elector: I live in it as a private master of a family, while God permits. I conjecture my life will be short, now that I see not only the princes in general, but the people also are enraged against me ‡. It was therefore by no means in the expectation of a long life that I entered into the married state; but, on the contrary, as I may be taken off suddenly, and as my doctrine respecting the lawfulness of the marriage of the clergy may possibly be treated with contempt after my death, I was desirous of showing my weaker brethren that I acted up to my principles §.

5. Lastly, in the latter part of the succeeding year he writes thus, "God of his great goodness hath blessed me with a fine healthy little Luther; and my rib Kate is also in excellent plight, and is in all things courteous and obliging to me, much beyond what I could have ventured to hope. I am thankful to God, and would not change my poverty for the riches of Crœsus ‖."

There are but two points respecting the marriage of Luther, which can at all interest the Protestant

* To Amsdorf, June 21, p. 295.

† The new elector John, and his son.

‡ He means the rustic malecontents, who were highly displeased because he declared himself so strongly against their rebellious spirit.

§ Ep. II. p. 300. ‖ To Stifel. p. 318.

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reader. Firstly, what were his own reflections near the time of that event, both before and after? and 2dly, what effects did it produce on the minds of his most sincere friends? for, in regard to his enemies, their slander and misrepresentation were to be expected, and no further notice needs be taken of them. It was with a view to satisfy these two points, that we have been so minute in this part of the narrative, and marked the dates of the letters with so much precision. Beausobre represents Luther, when he came to reflect coolly on the step he had taken, as repentant, afflicted, excessively low-spirited, and even deeply melancholic*. But the attentive student, having now before him sufficient materials to form his own judgment, will consider whether this colouring is not a great deal too high and unwarranted. Scultetus's statement appears to me both much more candid, and much more agreeable to the facts, when he says; "Luther, on account of his unexpected change of situation, and the various sentiments of mankind, was in some degree discomposed: however, as soon as he had collected himself, he wrote to Stifelius," 'Pray for me,' &c. See above, page 251. Now this letter, as I have observed, was written only four days after the day of his marriage, so that he was not very long in collecting himself. Further, not one syllable appears to have dropped from Luther himself, to excite a suspicion that he repented of his marriage, or was low-spirited afterwards †. On the contrary, a good conscience, confidence in Providence, and resignation to the Divine will, characterize all his letters written upon this subject, without a single exception; and moreover, they are all expressed with his accustomed vigour and precision: yet who sees not that all this may have been perfectly consistent with an

* Vol. III. p. 221.

† He lived twenty years with her in the greatest harmony. Seck. II. 18.

unusual degree of thoughtfulness for some time, and even of uneasiness and discomposure in his general deportment, upon so important a change of life? And this, we have seen, is allowed by Melancthon, and also by Scultetus, resting on his authority. CENT. XVI.

That several of Luther's good friends were exceedingly alarmed for the consequences, is, however, not to be denied. Justus Jonas, we have seen, wept upon the occasion; and Doctor Scurfius is said to have declared, that if this monk married, he would thereby undo all he had done, and that the WORLD and the DEVIL would be pleased. Luther, on hearing this speech, concluded directly otherwise, namely, that as the action was lawful and right, his marriage would infallibly vex BOTH*. Melancthon, also, there is no doubt, is to be reckoned among those who were deeply affected on this occasion†; and Beausobre thinks, it was because Luther had too great an opinion of the prudence of his friend, that he did not trust to him his secret intention to marry. Luther's own intimations are to me more satisfactory. From these I collect, that one reason both for his haste and his secrecy was, that he might be joined in matrimony, as he says, with Catharine BEFORE HE SHOULD BE COMPELLED TO HEAR A TUMULT OF VOCIFEROUS OPPOSITION‡. Moreover, being perfectly aware of the natural timidity of Melancthon's disposition, he did not invite him to supper on the evening of his marriage; and I entirely agree with the acute author of the Commentary on Lutheranism, that the omission appears to have given some degree of temporary offence. But Melancthon loved Luther too well to harbour long the slightest alienation of mind. Accordingly, on the fourth day after the marriage, we find M^n. writing in the best possible humour to a DISTANT clergyman, W. Lincus, thus: "Doctor

* Sec. 17. † Vita Melan. Camer.
‡ Letter to Amsdorf, 295.

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Martin is married. May this prove a happy event! He would have invited you to the marriage-dinner, but he feared to put you to expense. By our friendship I do intreat you to come. It will afford more ample matter for Doctor Scurfius's declamation*."

On the whole, there is the fullest evidence, that, of all his coadjutors in the business of the Reformation, Luther himself was the slowest to admit the lawfulness of the marriage of monks. In the year 1521 he expresses his surprise "that his Wittemberg friends now carry the matter so far as to allow even monks to marry. However, says he, they shall not force a wife upon ME†." And during the same year he discusses the question of celibacy, in long letters with Melancthon, to this effect; "What then, am I also at liberty to marry? Am I no longer a monk? It should seem that because I supplied you with a wife, you wish to take your revenge upon me; but depend upon it, I will take effectual care not to be caught in your snares."

All his doubts, however, on this subject were completely done away in a very short time after, and he gave his sentiments to the public without reserve ‡. Lastly, having thus attained true Scriptural views of the nature of Christian liberty, when the proper moment for his own marriage, as he thought, arrived, he acted according to those views without hesitation, under the full conviction that he was doing right, and in confident expectation of the Divine blessing. In all this there is no inconsistency in Luther. Still, the soundness of his discretion is called in question, for marrying a wife at the melancholy conjuncture of affairs in Germany, the Rustic civil war being scarcely over, and Frederic the Wise lately dead. Those, however, will acquit him of all blame, who think with Seckendorf, "That in time of war, or on

* Amœn. Lit. IV. 425. This clergyman had also been an Augustine monk, and had married a wife. Seck. 214.

† Ep. II. 240. to Spalat. ‡ See page 248.

the decease of princes, men are not bound, either by law or reason, to abstain from matrimonial contracts." CENT. XVI.

If censure on these accounts had been any where due, one might wonder that it should not have fallen on so celebrated a reformer as Spalatinus himself, who lived many years with Frederic, as his domestic chaplain and private secretary. Spalatinus not only actually married his wife a few months after the elector's death, but even solicited that prince's leave, during his last illness, to marry and to leave his court; and it does not appear that he thereby gave any offence to his master, or acted inconsistently with the prevalent maxims of the times. I cannot but observe, that the sentiments of the several actors in these scenes would have been better understood, if the dates of their private letters had been more attentively considered by historians, and some expressions contained in them interpreted more agreeably to the meaning of the originals. Melancthon's letter to Camerarius is in Greek; those of Luther, Spalatinus, and the rest, are in Latin.

Marriage of Melancthon, A. D. 1520.

Marriage of Spalatinus, A. D. 1525.

It is to me utterly unaccountable that Beausobre should positively affirm that Spalatinus and Melancthon married in the year 1524*; whereas all the accounts agree that the former was married at Altenburg in November 1525†, and the later so early as the year 1520‡. Luther, in a letter written in 1522, mentions the birth of Hannah, whom he calls the elegant daughter of Philip§; and Camerarius his biographer informs us, that Melancthon, not long after the Leipsic disputation, married a very reputable virgin of an ancient family in the city of Wittemberg, and lived with her for thirty-seven years‖. In fact, the marriage took

* III. 136. † Amœn. Lit. IV. 427. Sec. I. 22. 314. II. 30.
‡ S. 44. § Ep. II. 92. ‖ P. 36.

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place on the 25th of November, 1520, and appears to have been brought about by the interference and advice of Luther *.

CONTROVERSY WITH ERASMUS.

EVERY student of the history of the Reformation finds both instruction and amusement in observing the conduct of Erasmus. On his merits, as a restorer of learning, though it is scarcely possible to express ourselves too strongly, we need say no more. His well-earned honours in that respect are beyond the reach either of calumny or envy. It is the purity of his Christian principles, and the integrity and conscientiousness of his motives, which are called in question. His writings against monks and friars are allowed to have been of considerable service in abating the attachment of mankind to Popery; yet a most excellent judge † has not scrupled to affirm, that, through an excessive desire to be applauded for politeness, elegance, and moderation, no man had injured the cause of Luther so much as Erasmus. In fact, Erasmus himself boasts of his services in this respect to the Romish cause, and intimates how ill he had been requited ‡. The real character of this great man may be better known by a judicious selection of a few extracts from his own writings, than the numerous and contradictory accounts of his enemies and his advocates. Several passages, conducive to this purpose, will, I trust, be found in different parts of this History.

The weak side of Erasmus was his disposition at all times to court the favour of persons of rank and distinction; and it was through their incessant importunities that he was at length prevailed on, though with much reluctance, to enter the lists

* Melch. Ad. Vit. Mel. Ep. Luth. I. 278. II. 7.

† Seck. 201. ‡ Ep. Sylv. Prier. et Georg. Duc. Sax.

against Luther. The papal advocates who had hitherto appeared in the controversy had done their own cause no good. The reformers were growing more bold and numerous every day. The ancient hierarchy was shaken to its very foundations; and it was become sufficiently manifest, that neither ecclesiastical menaces, nor ecclesiastical punishments, could retard the progress of the new doctrines. The wisest and most moderate of the Roman-catholics saw plainly that the church had lost much of its credit with the people in general, and that nothing could materially serve their cause, but what tended to regain the PUBLIC OPINION. For the purpose of compassing so important an end, they all, to a man, fixed their eyes on Erasmus. Not very anxious respecting his private sentiments in religion, they were fully convinced of his qualifications for the task they wished him to undertake. An extensive erudition, a perspicuous and eloquent style, and especially an exquisite vein of sarcastic humour, marked this celebrated scholar as the proper champion to engage Luther. Accordingly, neither pains nor artifice were spared to secure his services. Princes, and prelates, and cardinals, and even the pope himself, were most assiduous in touching those strings, the vibrations of which they judged most likely to gratify his pride, stimulate his ambition, and awaken his natural timidity. King Henry VIII. of England is known to have entreated him to commence active hostilities against Luther; and the pope Adrian himself, in two memorable epistles, condescended to act the same suppliant part. The consummate address, artful flatteries, and lavish praises, used by the pontiff on this occasion, do but little accord with that reputation which some would allow him, for simplicity of manners, and ignorance of mankind*. The duke George

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of Saxony, agreeably to that sincerity and openness, which were indeed parts of his character as well as his violence and bigotry, exhorted Erasmus to take up his pen, and come forward as quickly as possible, and attack Luther openly; or, he said, there would be a general outcry against him, as one who had neglected his duty, and neither cared for the dignity of the church, nor the purity of the Gospel. "He ought to have done this several years ago; when he might very easily have extinguished the little flame, which had since increased to an immense conflagration. Whereas the little skirmishes which he had had with the heretic never looked like serious fighting; and the consequence had been, that many persons considered him as in reality of the same sentiments with the man whom he treated with so much lenity and forbearance*." Erasmus, in his answer to the duke, said he had hitherto not yielded to his highness's solicitations, for two reasons: 1. Both his age and his disposition forbade him to engage in so very dangerous a business. He had really a sort of instinctive aversion to religious controversies. 2. He had considered Luther's doctrine, whatever it might be, as a species of "necessary evil, from which he had hoped that, in the present very corrupt state of the church, some good might arise. He had never had the smallest connexion with him, but could not bear that his own moderation should be at last construed into a dishonourable collusion. He therefore at length came forward into the field. Both the king of England, and pope Clement VII. had urged him to take this step †."

Erasmus had sent to this pope his Paraphrase on the Acts of the Apostles; and, at the same time, expressed his inviolable attachment to the Roman See, and boasted of having refused the most pressing solicitations, even of great princes, to join Luther ‡.

* Ep. 800. † Ep. 813. 743. ‡ Ep. Clement. 783.

Clement, in return, made him most magnificent promises, and gave him two hundred florins, which Erasmus declares he would not have accepted, unless the pope had particularly specified that the money was merely an acknowledgment for the book*. Cardinal Campeggio also, in three flattering epistles, had requested to have a conference with him at Nuremberg, and afterwards sent express messengers to Basil to receive his advice †. Nothing could be more grateful to Erasmus, than to be thus looked up to by persons in high stations. Princes, he tells us, from all quarters, exhorted him to write against Luther. He sent a trusty servant to England, for the purpose of removing a suspicion which had been injected into the mind of Henry VIII., that he had assisted Luther in his reply to the king; and he expresses great satisfaction that this step had been attended with much success. His servant was rewarded; his old friends were increased and confirmed in their affections: also Henry and Cardinal Wolsey had even condescended to make their apologies to him ‡." In fact, Henry VIII. had solicited him to take the field against Luther in such strong terms, that early in the year 1523 we find Erasmus declaring he could no longer refuse compliance without absolutely affronting that monarch §. Accordingly, in the September of the same year, he wrote to the King, "I am meditating something against the novel doctrines, but I dare not publish it before I leave Germany, lest I should fall a victim before I appear in the contest ‖."

Erasmus writes to Henry VIII. A. D. 1523.

But of all the bigots who importuned Erasmus to commence an attack on the German Reformer, none was more violent, or used more acrimonious and unchristian language, than Tonstall, Bishop of London. Luther's treatise on the abolition of the

* Ep. Pirck. 803. † Ibid. and 794. ‡ Ep. 1860.
§ Ep. 744. ‖ Ep. 773.

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Mass seems to have particularly offended this angry prelate. He asks, "What can the heretic do more, unless he means to abolish Christ himself, as indeed I hear the Divine Virgin is rejected by his followers?" He then proceeds, "By the sufferings and blood of Christ, by the glory which you hope for in heaven, I exhort and conjure you, Erasmus, nay, the Church entreats and conjures you, to encounter this many-headed monster! You are now advanced in years, and, I pray, how can you conclude your life better than in driving back into his den, by the sword of the Spirit, this Cerberus, who by his dismal barking so insults all the ecclesiastical orders*?"

These and similar multiplied and reiterated importunities, to which we may probably add the fear of losing the pension which he received from England†, at length determined Erasmus to become an open adversary of the reformers.

* Ep. 772. † Seck. 309.

CONTINUATION OF THE CONTROVERSY WITH ERASMUS.

1. THE DIATRIBE.
2. LUTHER'S TREATISE DE SERVO ARBITRIO.
3. SCRIPTURAL ARGUMENTS USED IN THE CONTROVERSY.
4. FURTHER ACCOUNT OF THE SAME CONTROVERSY.
5. LUTHER'S ARGUMENTS FROM ST. PAUL AND ST. JOHN.
6. THE REPLY OF ERASMUS. HYPERAPISTES.
7. SCEPTICISM OF ERASMUS.
8. ORTHODOXY OF LUTHER COMPARED WITH THE SCEPTICISM OF ERASMUS.
9. MELANCTHON'S JUDGMENT OF THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN LUTHER AND ERASMUS.
10. HOSTILITY OF ERASMUS: HIS APOLOGIES.
11. INCONSISTENCY AND LEVITY OF ERASMUS.

1. THE DIATRIBE.

IN the autumn of 1524, this elegant scholar published his dissertation, called Diatribe, on the Freedom of the Will; having first sent a part of the manuscript to Henry VIII. for the approbation of that prince, who always pretended to a considerable degree of theological acumen. Perhaps the author hoped by this flattering attention to induce Henry to engage for the expenses of the publication; as he took care to inform his majesty, that no printer at Basil would dare to undertake his or any work CENT. XVI.

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which contained a word against Luther, and that therefore he must print the book somewhere else. "We may, however," said he, "write what we please against the pope. Such is the present state of Germany *."

In editing his treatise on Free Will, Erasmus appears to have valued himself very much upon his courage, and to have expected mighty consequences from the publication. "The little book," says he, "is out; and though written with the greatest moderation, will, if I mistake not, excite most prodigious commotions. Already pamphlets fly at my head †." Again, "The die is cast: my little book on Free Will is published: a bold deed, believe me, if the situation of Germany at this time be considered: I expect to be pelted; but I will console myself with the example of your majesty, who has not escaped their outrages ‡." Very much in the same style he expresses himself to Cardinal Wolsey, and adds, "I have not chosen to dedicate this work to any one, lest my calumniators should instantly say that in this business I had been hired to please the great: otherwise I would have inscribed it to you, or to the pope §."

The Reader, whose expectations may have been raised by all this ostentatious parade, will be greatly disappointed on the perusal of the Diatribe of Erasmus. It is evidently the production of a man who has scoured the surface of his question, but by no means penetrated into its substance. The author affects much moderation, and would persuade us that he scarcely undertakes to decide: he pretends only to CONFER, or to INQUIRE. An experienced disputant, however, soon perceives, that, under a garb of modesty and diffidence, there is in this performance a firm attachment in some degree

* Ep. 774. Jortin, 322.
† To Tonstall, 813.
‡ To Henry VIII. 816.
§ To Wolsey, 809.

at least to the Pelagian tenets *. Close reasoning was not the province of Erasmus, and he constantly betrays a consciousness of being out of his element. He uses plenty of inconclusive argument, but is nevertheless abundantly positive. CENT. XVI.

The ablest defenders of the FREEDOM of the Will have owned their entire inability to reconcile the prescience of the Deity with the contingency of human actions, or the responsibility of created intelligent beings; but Erasmus, like a true controversialist who conceived it his chief business to conquer, chooses rather to have recourse to scholastic subtilties and distinctions, than candidly to acknowledge his ignorance in a matter which has hitherto exceeded the skill of philosophy.

In reading the Diatribe, persons will be affected differently, according to circumstances. Those who have not made this contentious question their study, may be pleased with the writer's elegant flow of classical Latinity; but if they are of a religious turn of mind, they will be puzzled and confounded as to the grand points in debate, rather than materially enlightened or consoled. Those who have well digested the arguments on both sides, and are aware of the respective difficulties, and know precisely where in this business all human reasoning and research ought to stop, will be convinced how ill qualified Erasmus was to elucidate difficulties respecting the volitions of the human mind, especially theological difficulties. These they will find neither cleared up in the Diatribe, which indeed may be impossible in some instances, nor yet distinctly stated, which is the next thing to be aimed at, and is always possible.

* The learned Reader will be aware, that besides Pelagians and Semi-pelagians, strictly so called, there are also numerous shades of distinction included under the term Pelagian. However, with all these sectaries it seems indispensable to deny the Scriptural doctrine of the natural depravity of man, and the Calvinistic sentiment of irresistible Grace.

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No man that ever lived, perhaps, was less disposed than Martin Luther to temporize with his adversaries in essential points; yet in the instance of Erasmus, it is admitted that he exercised extraordinary patience and forbearance. The reason is, Erasmus, by his writings against monks and friars, had been of considerable service in abating the attachment of mankind to popery. Moreover, he was one of the first literary characters in the world, and well deserves the thanks of all who have a relish for classical learning. No wonder therefore Luther, in the great business of the Reformation, should have been anxious to prevent so much weight from being placed in the opposite scale. But Erasmus grew every day more and more out of humour with the Lutherans. He had repeatedly declared that the Church wanted reformation, but would never run any risk to forward the good cause. Hence the reformers became cold in their regards for him; and he, in return, beheld with pique and jealousy the rapid progress of the new system. Mutual abuse and accusation was the unavoidable consequence of this state of things. By some, Erasmus was libelled as a deserter of the faith, and a parasite, who paid his court to popes, prelates, and cardinals, and might be hired for a morsel of bread, to any purpose*. This was enough to raise the indignation of a man who had been accustomed all his life to receive commendations and flatteries. The angry scholar took up his pen to chastise the Lutherans, and ceased to be on good terms with them any longer. "They were men of a seditious turn of mind†: some of them neither feared God nor man, insomuch that Luther and Melancthon themselves had judged it necessary to write against them‡." In the Lutheran faction, said Erasmus, there were persons who were actuated by a spirit widely different from that of the Gospel§. Men,

* Ep. 805. † Id. 781. ‡ Id. 792. § Id. 805.

who stood prepared for every mischief, represented him as timid, because he acted conscientiously. Could he but see Evangelical fruit, he would soon convince them he was no coward *. CENT. XVI.

For a long time, however, the hostility of Erasmus was confined within the bounds of his epistolary correspondence. But circumstances were every day arising to exasperate the contention, and widen the breach between him and the reformers. Ulric Hutten, an intemperate admirer of Luther, published an acrimonious invective against Erasmus, which drew from him a little tract, called Spongia, sufficiently censorious and peevish †.

Hutten had taken the liberty of blaming Erasmus for paying too much regard to the court of Rome. This was a very tender point; and the more provoking, first, because the fact was undeniable; and, secondly, because the Romish faction really disliked him almost as much as they did Luther ‡; notwithstanding that the ecclesiastical dignitaries gave him good words and fair promises, for the purpose of persuading him to take a decided part against the great Saxon Reformer §.

Luther writes to Erasmus.

The sagacity of Luther pointed out to him distinctly the situation of the mind of Erasmus, thus puzzled and distracted by a contrariety of motives. He viewed him as a man of letters buoyed up with the love of praise and the patronage of the great; also, as flattered and caressed by popes and prelates, and supposed peculiarly qualified to support a fall-

* Ep. 845.

† Erasmus, however boasts of his lenity towards Hutten, and says he had passed over his scandalous conduct; that he had been a spenthrift, a gamester, and a fornicator, and had extorted money from the Carthusians; that he had attacked some ecclesiastics, and killed some monks. Catal. Lucub.

‡ Erasmus represents the divines as hating literature, and as accusing him of heresy, Ep. 803. He says, he did not much care for the abuse of the Lutherans, but to be pelted on both sides was hard. Id. 826.

§ Id. 743. 819, 820.

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ing church. Moreover, he was aware how Erasmus, by trimming artfully between the two parties, had lost the confidence and friendship of both; and how, in his present state of irritation, he was disposed to do service to the Romanists, and regain their favour. He was sincerely sorry, therefore, that he had been so roughly treated by Hutten, and other advocates of the Reformation. He would gladly have prevented him from becoming an open enemy, as he had long despaired of ever seeing him a decided friend of pure Christianity. Reflecting on these circumstances, and hearing that Erasmus was about to publish his Diatribe, or some other inimical piece, Luther, in the almost forlorn hope of persuading him to peace and silence, determined however to make his last effort. For this purpose he composed a memorable letter, quite in his own best style, clear, nervous, and ingenuous, and full of life, and fire, and spirit, and sent it to his classical adversary *. It is a specimen of epistolary writing in perfect contrast to the manner of Erasmus, and must have vexed him not a little. To have been told, that the "affairs of the Reformers were now advanced to such a point that their cause was in no peril, even though Erasmus should attack it with all his might," must have been peculiarly galling to his pride: yet the writer mixed so many handsome and just compliments with his animadversions, that Erasmus was constrained to allow, that Martin Luther had written him a letter sufficiently civil, but that, for fear of his calumniators, he did not dare to answer him with equal civility †.

But whatever might be the secret inclination of Erasmus, or whatever might have been his wish in other circumstances, he was now too deeply pledged, by numerous declarations and promises, to think of

* See Appendix, Luther's Letter to Erasmus in 1524. Also Ep. 846.

† Ep. 803.

retracting his design of appearing in the field against Luther. CENT. XVI.

He answered Luther briefly to this effect: I cannot admit you to have more Evangelical sincerity than myself, and I trust I do more to promote the Gospel than many who boast of being Evangelical. I fear Satan may delude you; at least, I doubt the truth of your doctrines; and I would never profess what I do not believe, much less what I have not attained. Besides, I dread the ruin of literature.

As yet I have not written a syllable against you: otherwise I might have secured much applause from the great; but I saw I should injure the Gospel. I have only endeavoured to do away the idea that there is a perfect understanding between you and me, and that all your doctrines are to be found in my books. Pains have been taken to instil this sentiment into the minds of the princes, and it is hard even now to convince them it is not so.—Whatever you may write against me gives me no great concern. In a worldly view, nothing could do me more service. But it is my desire to surrender with a good conscience, my soul to Christ; and I would that all were so affected. You profess yourself ready to give an account of the faith that is in you; why then do you take it amiss that any one, with a view to learn, should undertake to debate some points with you? Perhaps Erasmus, by writing against you, may do more good to the cause of the Gospel than some foolish scribblers of your own party, who will not suffer a man to be a quiet spectator of these contentions,—the tragical issue of which I do dread*.

It was the authority of Erasmus, and not his arguments, which determined Luther to publish an answer to the Diatribe. "I will answer him," says

* MS. Archiv. 310. S.

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he, "for the sake of those, who, with a view to their own glory in opposition to Christ, make a bad use of his authority *." And again, "my dislike of the book is beyond all belief; and it is a pain to me to answer so learned a book, composed by so learned an author †."

2. Luther's treatise De Servo Arbitrio.

Luther's reply did not make its appearance till more than a year after the publication of Erasmus. It is intitled, On the Bondage of the Will. The papal advocate Cocklæus ‡ would intimate that Luther was induced to answer Erasmus, chiefly because Emser and himself had translated the Diatribe into the German language. But whoever peruses the elaborate work De Servo Arbitrio, and reflects on the author's numerous employments, will have no difficulty in accounting for the delay that took place. That he formed the design of confuting the Diatribe very soon after he had read it, appears from his letters to private friends. This tract was not published till the 1st or 2d of September 1524 §: and about the end of the same month he says, "I am entirely taken up with Erasmus and his Free Will; and I shall do my best to prove him wrong throughout, as is truly the case ‖."

The Diatribe was published A. D. 1524.

And in the suc-

* Nic. Hausman, II. 243.

† The words are: "Respondere tam erudito libro tam eruditi viri." Jortin thinks it should be INerudito libro. But I see no reason for suspecting an error in the text. The Diatribe is sufficiently learned, if by learning we understand an acquaintance with numerous writers of repute. But the extensiveness of Erasmus's reading, and the rapidity of his glances, very often did not allow him to think and digest.

Moreover, I find it is ERUDITO not only in Seckendorf's extract, but also in the original itself by Aurifaber,—a book exceedingly scarce, and which Jortin probably never saw. II. 238.

‡ Acta Luth.

§ Ep. Eras. 809 and 810.

‖ Georg. Spal. 299.

ceeding October he says to another friend, "Go on with your labours, my Nicholas, and exercise all the patience you can: at present I am wholly employed in confuting Erasmus*." But afterwards we find him interrupted by the affairs of Carolstadt, and resolving to postpone his answer to Erasmus till he should have done with that turbulent reformer †. CENT. XVI.

At length, towards the end of 1525 ‡, came out Luther's celebrated treatise De Servo Arbitrio, which provoked Erasmus the more, as it was in some measure unexpected. The work was received with avidity. The booksellers of Wittemberg, Augsburg, and Nuremberg, strove who could produce their numerous editions the fastest: and in regard to the merits of the composition, it may not be improper to observe, that Luther himself, many years afterwards, had so good an opinion of it, as to declare, that he could not review any one of his writings with complete satisfaction, unless perhaps his Catechism, and his Bondage of the Will §. The following address to Erasmus was printed by Luther, and placed as a sort of preface to this same treatise on the Bondage of the Will. Luther's answer was published, A. D. 1525.

"Venerable Erasmus,

"Every body wonders that Luther, contrary to his usual practice and the general expectation, should have been so long in replying to your Diatribe. How is it, say they, that a man, who hitherto has appeared rather to seek than to decline public discussions of this sort, should at once exhibit so much patience and forbearance? Or is fear the cause of his silence? for certainly his enemies triumph. They congratulate Erasmus on having gained a vic-

* Nic. Haus. 300. † Amsdorfio, II. 270.

‡ December, T. III. 165. Jena.

§ At Strasburg there is said to be a MS. letter to Fabricius Capito in 1537, in which Luther expresses this opinion of his Catechism and his Bondage of the Will. Scultet. 34. And Sturmius tells us he himself has seen the letter. Melch. Ad. p. 82, fol. Vit. Luther.

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tory; and they ask with an air of insult, What, has this Maccabæus, this sturdy dogmatist, at last found an antagonist against whom he dare not open his mouth?

"The palm of genius and eloquence all concede to you;—much more therefore I, who am but a perfect barbarian, and have always been conversant in rude scenes. I confess further, you have broken my spirit, and made me languish before the battle: and this for two reasons.

"1. You have managed your opposition to me with so much astonishing art and steady moderation, that I find it impossible to be angry with you.

"2. By what fate or fortune it has happened I know not, but certainly you have not said one word new on this most important subject. And therefore it may seem superfluous for me now to tread again the same ground which I have so often gone over before; especially as P. Melancthon, in his invincible theological tracts, has trampled upon and absolutely ground to powder every argument you have produced. To be plain, your book, in my judgment, suffers so exceedingly on being compared with his, that I am much grieved for yourself, that you should pollute your most beautiful and ingenious language with such sordid sentiments: and again, I feel most indignant to see such contemptible materials conveyed in the most precious and ornamental pieces of eloquence. They are like the filth of a dunghill placed in golden dishes. Your extreme backwardness to appear in this contest convinces me that you yourself were aware of this, and that conscience suggested to you, that whatever might be the force of your eloquence, it would be impossible for you so to disguise your notions, that I should not discover their vanity through every false colouring. I pretend to no eloquence; but, by the grace of God, I trust I have a little knowledge of the subject; and there you are deficient, notwithstanding your great capacity and extraordinary powers of language.

"In this business I have been inclined to reason thus: Our side of the question is so fortified by Scripture, that those who can be shaken by the trifling objections of Erasmus, however elegantly expressed, do not deserve that on their account I should write an answer to the Diatribe. Thousands upon thousands of books will do such persons no good. Enough has been done, by my friends and myself, for those who take the Spirit for their guide; and in regard to those who are not led by the Spirit, it is no wonder if they are shaken by every breath of wind. Wherefore I had almost resolved to be silent; not on account of my numerous engagements, nor the difficulty of the thing, nor yet through the dread of Erasmus and his prodigious eloquence, but most sincerely from the low estimation in which I hold the Diatribe,—not to mention, what is so characteristic of Erasmus, your excessive versatility in it throughout. You exceed Ulysses in caution: one while you affirm nothing, at another time you assume an air of positiveness: It is impossible to arrive at any distinct and satisfactory issue with such men,—unless indeed one had the art of catching Proteus.

"However, my faithful brethren in Christ Jesus do now suggest a reason why I ought to answer you; and there is some weight in it. They tell me a reply is, in general, expected from me; they say, Erasmus's authority is not to be despised, and that the faith of several is shaken. Therefore I am disposed to own, at length, that I may have carried my silence too far; that I may have been influenced too much by carnal reasonings, and not have sufficiently kept in mind that duty by which I am debtor both to the wise and to the unwise.

"For, though true religion does not rely on merely external means, but, besides him who plants and waters, requires the Spirit to give the increase; yet, because the Spirit is free, and in no wise dependent on our wills, the rule of St. Paul should ever be

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observed, 'Be instant in season and out of season.' 'We know not at what hour our Lord will come.' Be it so, that there are some who in reading my writings have not as yet been led by the Spirit; be it so, that the Diatribe has gained possession of their minds: what does all this prove, except that their hour may not yet be come? And who knows, my excellent Erasmus, but God may be pleased, through the means of such a poor wretched vessel as myself, to visit you?—and I do from my heart beseech the Father of mercies, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that the operation of this little book may be such, that I may thereby gain you as a most dear brother to the cause.

"In conclusion, permit me, my Erasmus, to request you to excuse my defects in eloquence; as, on the other hand, I have to bear with your want of information in this particular instance. God does not bestow all his gifts on one person."

The controversy between these great men is the same which has appeared in various ages of the Church, and even in our own times. The doctrine maintained by Luther cannot, I think, be comprehended and expressed in fewer or clearer words, than in those of our own Church; namely, that, as fallen creatures, "we have NO POWER TO DO GOOD WORKS, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will*." This humiliating sentiment was peculiarly offensive to Erasmus; and so it must ever prove to the pride of every human heart, which is not yet brought, through a sense of its unworthiness, to deep contrition and penitence at the cross of the Saviour.

Erasmus had observed, that he could not but give some weight to the authority of numerous learned

* Tenth Article of Religion.

men, whose judgment had been confirmed by the consent of ages. Among these, he said, were excellent divines, and holy martyrs, and many who had wrought miracles. Then, among the modern theologians, and universities, and councils, and bishops, and popes, what a mass of learning, genius, and goodness, all, he said, on his side of the question: and only Wickliff and Laurentius Valla against him *. To this Luther replies, "I own there is a great deal in what you say: I myself, for more than ten years, felt the force of this very argument, and more, I believe, than any person else; insomuch that I thought it impossible for this Troy to be taken. And I call God to witness with my own soul, that I should have remained to this day in the same state, had I not been compelled to yield to the force of evidence, and the pressure of my own conscience †. That Being, who knows the secrets of hearts, knows that my sole object is to magnify his grace, and in no degree to commend myself. But you would reduce me to the dilemma, either of giving up the point, or of boasting of myself, and blaming the fathers. I extricate myself however at once, by owning, that I bow to your judgment in regard to learning, genius, history, and all other things, except three: and in regard to these three; namely, 1. What are the evidences of being led by the Spirit; 2. What is the right province of miracles; 3. What the nature and effects of sanctification; as far as I know you from your writings, you are so inexperienced and uninformed, that you cannot produce from them a single syllable to the purpose. I repeat it, and press the point close,—that in all the instances on which you place so much stress, there is not one, where there is any clear proof of the operation of the Spirit, or of the existence of miracles, or of a sanctified disposition of the heart.

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* Diatribe, 1218, where Erasmus mentions Manichæus also.
† Luth. 436.

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You are not aware how much of what you say derives its credit from mere custom and common language; and how all this loses its weight the moment it is called to the bar of conscience.

"Show me," continues Luther, "any one instance of a man who, through the pure efficacy of Free Will, ever, in the smallest degree, either mortified his appetites, or forgave an injury. On the contrary, I can easily show you, that the very holy men whom you boast of as Free-willers, always in their prayers to God totally laid aside every idea of Free Will, and had recourse to nothing but grace, pure grace. So Augustine often, who is entirely on my side in this dispute: so Bernard also, who, when dying, said, 'I have lost my time, because I have lived to bad purpose.'

Nevertheless, I grant that these holy men themselves would sometimes, during their disputes, hold a different language concerning the nature of Free Will. And, in general, I observe that good men, when they approach the throne of grace, forget the powers of Free Will, on which they may have written polemically; and despairing of themselves, have recourse to grace alone. And though they may have exalted the natural resources of man, yet in prayer they forget all this: that is, in affection and practice they are different from what they were in disputation and argument. But who would not estimate the character both of good and bad men from the former, rather than the latter *?"

Erasmus had defined freedom to be that power of the human will, by which a man can either apply himself to those things which lead to his eternal salvation, or turn away from them; for it would be ridiculous, he maintains, to bid a man CHOOSE, who had not the power of turning himself either one way or the other †. Luther, with as much acuteness as if he had studied Mr. Locke's famous

* Luth. 437. † Diatr. 1125.

chapter on power *, replies, that as the expression, Power of the human will, means that faculty by which we choose or refuse, he does not see how this same power can act, or be used, either in the way of applying to any thing or of turning away from it, except by choosing or refusing. For if we should suppose the said power to be a sort of medium between the abstract faculty of the will and its operations, we shall find nothing is gained by such an hypothesis; nor is it possible to go one step further than simply this, that men do choose and refuse †. CENT. XVI.

In reading the Diatribe, it is abundantly more difficult to discover the PRECISE SENTIMENTS of the author, than to perceive a steady intention to discredit the doctrines of Luther. He takes notice, that some, who differ widely from Pelagius, allow very much to the operation of grace, and scarcely any thing to free will; but yet do not take it away entirely. They affirm, that a man can neither begin, carry on, nor finish any thing good, without the continual aid of Divine grace. This opinion, because it leaves a man the power of desiring and endeavouring, and yet takes away every ground for ascribing the effect to his own strength, Erasmus pronounces MODERATELY PROBABLE; yet he seems to think it objectionable. For he goes on to say, There are others whose opinion is MORE OBJECTIONABLE ‡, namely, who contend that the Will can do evil only, and that grace performs all the good. These carry too far their fear of ascribing merit to good works. But the most objectionable sentiment of all is §, to call Free Will an empty name; and to say, it is of no avail, either before grace or after it; for that God works both the good and the evil in us, and that all things are absolutely necessary.

* Locke, Hum. Und.
† Luth. 442. 6.
‡ Diatr. 1224. durior.
§ Id. durissima.

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"You make three opinions here," replies Luther, "when in reality, as far as I am concerned, there is but one. Perhaps, I may not have been able to express myself intelligibly to you, either in the German language, or in my indifferent Latin; but I call God to witness, that I intended the terms used in the two latter opinions, neither to convey or intimate any sentiment different from what is expressed in the first opinion.—You yourself say, that the human Will, since the Fall, is so far depraved, as to have become the servant of sin, and of itself, utterly unable to amend its state*: Then, what is Free Will, when applied to a faculty, where it is granted that all liberty is lost, and that slavery has commenced, under the service of sin, but an empty name? I believe Augustine to have been precisely of the same judgment. It is the Diatribe that is inconsistent. For if your Free Will, according to your first opinion, which you call probable, has so lost its liberty, that it cannot choose the good, I would wish to know what is the nature of those desires and endeavours, of which you speak as yet left in men's power: certainly they cannot be good desires, or good endeavours; for you admit that the Will cannot choose the good. Again, you allow that though desires and endeavours are in a man's power, yet still, there is no room for ascribing any effect to their efficacy. Now, who can comprehend such a position? If the Will really possesses the powers of desire and endeavour, why are not effects, proportionate to these powers, to be ascribed to them? and if there be no effects whatever, then what proof have you that the will possesses the powers you contend for? There is no escape for Proteus here;—for if these are not monstrous contradictions, what are so?"

Beausobre undertakes to decide, without ceremony in favour of the very great superiority of Erasmus, compared with Luther, in the articles

* Diatr. 1221. Luth. 444. & 5.

both of BEAUTY OF STYLE, and of SOLIDITY OF JUDGMENT *. It is odd, that the Historian should make such an assertion, when this very controversy on the Will must have been present to his mind.— For though no man, in regard to beauty and elegance of style, will think of pitching Luther against Erasmus in general, yet, in this particular instance, Luther's tract De Servo Arbitrio is abundantly more orderly, perspicuous, and nervous, than any of Erasmus's writings on the same subject; insomuch that Erasmus himself owns it to be a work laboured with the greatest care †. Then, as to the argumentation and general management of the question, whether we think with Luther, or differ from him on the subject-matter in debate, we can scarcely read a page of his treatise, without perceiving the hand of a master conscious of his own strength, and, at the same time, convinced of the weakness of his adversary. In fact, Luther regarded the question concerning the Will, purely as it related to religious doctrines that were near his heart; and therefore his profound knowledge of the Scriptures gave him a great advantage over Erasmus, who was a very superficial theologian, doubtful in his sentiments, and indeterminate in his expressions. Even in the metaphysical niceties, which could not be entirely avoided in this abstruse inquiry, he proved greatly his overmatch. Erasmus's extensive reading enabled him, indeed, to be diffuse and scholastic; but Luther was neither to be frightened nor overborne by quotations and authorities. He swept them away

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* Beausob. III. 130.

† "—ingens volumen diu multoque studio elaboratum." 923. To F. Choregat.

"—præter omnem expectationem emisit librum in me summa cura quidem elaboratum." 911. To F. Sylvius.

"—præter omnem expectationem provolans liber Lutheri - - Quicquid Ecclesia Wittem. potuit vel eruditione vel maledicentia, id totum in eum librum collatum est: Volumen est plusquam justæ magnitudinis." 919. To Mich. Episc.

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quickly, like so many cobwebs; and, by the application of a little plain good sense, pointed out what ought to be the boundaries of every attempt to investigate the nature of human liberty: and lastly, he supported his own sentiments on the question, without disguise, mystery, or ostentation.

Let us hear him briefly on the difficult subjects of Necessity, Contingence, and the Prescience of God.

"A christian," says he, "should know that nothing is contingent in the mind of the Supreme Being, who foresees and orders all events according to his own eternal unchangeable will.—This is a thunderbolt to the notion of Free Will. For hence, all events, though to our minds contingent, are necessary and unchangeable as they respect the Divine Will. The Divine Will cannot be deceived or disappointed. Contingency implies a changeable will, such as in God does not exist *.

"Nevertheless, I wish we had a better word than NECESSITY, which is commonly made use of in this dispute. For it conveys to the understanding an idea of restraint, which is totally contrary to the act of choosing. In fact there is no restraint, either on the Divine or the human will: in both cases, the will does what it does, whether good or bad, simply, and as at perfect liberty, in the exercise of its own faculty. This unchangeableness and infallibility in God, is the ground of all our hope and confidence. If HIS Will were liable to contingencies, what dependence could there be on his promises? But, 'let God be true, and every man a liar.'—Your notions, my Erasmus, destroy peace of conscience, and all the comforts of the Spirit, and lead to impieties and blasphemies almost worse than any thing of Epicurus.—Not that you intend all this: no; I do not believe you would teach such things designedly. But learn hence, how a man, who undertakes a bad

* De. Serv. Arb. 429.

cause, may be led on to advance most dangerous doctrines *."

Luther proceeds thus: "So long as the operative grace of God is absent from us, every thing we do has in it a mixture of evil; and therefore, of necessity, our works avail not to salvation. Here I do not mean a necessity of compulsion, but a necessity as to the certainty of the event. A man who has not the Spirit of God, does evil willingly and spontaneously. He is not violently impelled, AGAINST his will, as a thief is to the gallows. But the man cannot alter his disposition to evil; nay, even though he may be externally restrained from DOING evil, he is averse to the restraint, and his inclination remains still the same. Again, when the Holy Spirit is pleased to change the will of a bad man, the new man still acts voluntarily: he is not compelled by the Spirit to determine contrary to his will, but his will itself is changed; and he cannot now do otherwise than love the good, as before he loved the evil †."

The origin of evil, however, Luther does not attempt to explain; and if Erasmus had seen the difficulties on that head as clearly as Luther did, and had been as candid in owning them, these controversialists would have found themselves much nearer agreed. Erasmus had affirmed, "that to represent God, first, as causing evil in men, and secondly, as punishing them on that very account, would have the most pernicious consequences. Who would think God had any love for mankind? who would not think him a cruel Being, that took pleasure in the sufferings of the wretched; and lastly, who would take any pains to correct their vices, or subdue their passions ‡?" Luther's reply briefly amounts to this: "Wicked men will always harbour wicked and blasphemous thoughts; but pious and good men will

* De Serv. Arb. 430. † Ib. 434.
‡ Diat. 1217.

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adore the Divine Economy, without scrutinizing into it too nicely, firmly persuaded that God only is just and wise, and never does wrong to any one; and that, whatever may be the appearances to us, there are always good reasons for what he does. We may not be able to comprehend how it is that he is just and merciful, though many perish, and few are saved; but it is our duty, nevertheless, to believe that he is so, and that he has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. God does not punish the wicked, because he delights in the sufferings of the wretched, but because he has wise purposes in view, which call for their punishment. The best of men are content with this account: they pretend not to explain all the difficulties which arise on this subject; they rather repress the risings of pride and discontent, and exercise the graces of humility.

"But still I do not wonder that fallen and depraved creatures should be offended with such notions of the Supreme Being, as that he deserts men, hardens them, condemns them; and all this from the mere pleasure which he takes in the sins and the eternal punishment of the miserable. Is this the Being who is represented as so abundant in mercy and goodness? I myself have often been so offended with this view of the Almighty, as to have been brought by it to the very brink of despair, and to have wished I had never been born; till, at length, I learnt how wholesome a thing it is to despair of a man's own powers, and how near he then is to the Grace of God*."

3. Scriptural arguments used in the controversy.

In this detail, we may be very concise respecting the Scriptural arguments of the Diatribe; they are all so much alike. For example, 'I have set before

* Luth. 434. 461, b. & 462. and in other parts of the De Serv. Arbit.

you this day life and death, therefore choose life.' 'Turn ye unto me, and I will turn unto you*.' 'Whosoever desires life and good days, let him keep his tongue from evil †,' &c. The numerous admonitions, threatenings, and promises, of this sort, appear to have made a great impression on the mind of Erasmus ‡. However, they had all been well considered by Luther, and he had his answer at hand. "They prove nothing," says he, "as to the human POWERS of performance, but are merely imperative as to OUR DUTIES. For, if they prove any thing in regard to our powers, they prove too much; they would prove, that our wills, without the assistance of God's grace, are in a condition to keep all the Divine commandments,—a position which Erasmus will not maintain. The use of these scriptural directions and admonitions is, to teach man, who is naturally proud and blind, the nature of his disease; how miserable and impotent he is, and how completely a captive in the chains of sin. It is true, it is written, 'Turn ye to me;' but does it thence follow, that we can turn ourselves? It is written also, 'Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart;' but will any man say, that fallen creatures can love God with all their hearts? All such passages point out what the holy law of God requires, but are no proof of our ability to perform it. The Diatribe is a little stupid, or at least rather sleepy here §."

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Erasmus had owned ‖, that there were some passages of Scripture, which seem to take away the liberty of the will entirely: and these he had attempted to explain. In answer, Luther says, "You may here observe to what little purpose it is for a human being to raise a smoke, in opposition to the thunder and lightning of God." And then he proceeds to make great use of the ninth chapter of Romans; and,

* Zech. i. 3.
† Psalm xxxiv. 12, 13.
‡ Diat. 1224—6.
§ Luth. 448.
‖ Id. 1230.

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with an air of triumph, he derides the comments of Erasmus, who, after Origen and Jerome, had had recourse to tropes and figures in his interpretation of St. Paul. "Mere human reason," continues Luther, "can never comprehend how God is good and merciful; and therefore the Diatribe makes to itself a God of its own fancy, who hardens nobody, condemns nobody; pities every body, saves every body, takes away hell, and the fear of death and punishment. In this way would the Writer excuse and defend the Almighty as just and good.

"But Faith and the Spirit judge otherwise. By them we believe God to be good, though he should visit with destruction even the whole human race. Moreover, to what purpose do we fatigue ourselves with attempts to place the blame of a hard heart on the abuse of Free Will; when, not a single instance can be brought, either where the heart was softened without the help of the Holy Spirit, or where a man obtained mercy while he trusted in his own strength? —Let us stick close to the pure simple word of God *."

The reasonings of St. Paul, respecting the foreknowledge and predetermination of God, appear to have gravelled the author of the Diatribe more than any other arguments contained in the sacred writings.—"Thou wilt say then, Why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will †?" This interrogation is evidently grounded on the idea, that necessity takes away all human responsibility; and, further, that as the will of God is irresistible, it is unreasonable to find fault. Erasmus admits this to be a great difficulty; and the intelligent Reader will think that he had better have made no attempt to solve it. "God," says he, "who knows what is to come, and has the power of preventing it, and yet does not prevent it, must be considered, in some way, as choosing that the thing should be so.

* Luth. 457. & 458. † Rom. ix.

And this is St. Paul's very argument: 'Who can resist his will,' either when he has mercy on, or when he hardens whom he pleases. Thus, the will of God, which is the chief cause of every event, APPEARS to fix a necessity on all human determinations. Neither does the Apostle untie the knot; but, on the contrary he rebukes the objector. Who art thou 'who repliest against God?'—But observe, it is only the impious murmurer whom he rebukes, just as a master would rebuke a forward servant,—'What have you to do with the reasons of my orders?—see that you obey them.' Now this same master would have given a different answer to a prudent, well-meaning servant, who modestly, and with a good intention, had asked the question. It was very right that Pharaoh should perish; nevertheless, this king was not compelled by the Divine volitions to continue pertinaciously wicked. God foresaw, and in a certain sense, chose, that he should continue in sin, and should perish: for he had long ago DESERVED to suffer for his notorious crimes. But, I ask, at what point in a man's life DOES DESERT begin, on the supposition that there is no freedom, and that all is necessity from beginning to end.

"In the same manner," continues Erasmus, "God foreknew, and therefore in a certain sense must have chosen, that Judas should betray his Master. If you consider the prescience of God as infallible, and his will as unchangeable, it must necessarily happen, that Judas would betray his Master; and yet Judas might have changed his mind. Suppose he had changed his mind; you will say, what then? I answer, that still the Divine prescience would neither have failed, nor the Divine will have been obstructed; for, in that case, God would both have foreknown and chosen that Judas would alter his mind. The schoolmen here make

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a very nice distinction, between the necessity of a consequence, and a consequence in itself necessary*. They admit the former, but deny the latter." "But," says he, "it is not my design to insist on these subtilties."

It was natural that the obscure and indeterminate sentiments of Erasmus, the result of scholastic and theoretical reading, should make little impression on the mind of Luther, whose religion was vital, practical, and experimental in the highest degree; and who had been led, by internal conviction, to feel what nature could NOT do, and what grace alone COULD effect. Such a character, furnished at the same time with a deep and comprehensive knowledge of Scripture, was conscious of a reasonableness and stability in his faith, which is never to be attained by mere study, acquaintance with books and opinions, or any exertion of natural powers. In this part of the argument, Luther is remarkably nervous and distinct. "You undermine," says he, "at once, all the Divine promises and threatenings; you destroy faith and the fear of God; in fact, you deny the Deity himself, unless you allow a necessary efficacy to his prescience. The distinction of the necessity of a consequence, and of a consequence in itself necessary, is a mere figment. The Diatribe may invent and re-invent fancy after fancy of this sort, may cavil and re-cavil as much as it pleases; I maintain, if God foreknew that Judas would be a traitor, then it could not be otherwise; and though Judas certainly committed the act in pursuance of his own will, and without any restraint, yet it was not in his power, or that of any created being, to change his wicked disposition.—The wicked choice here made by Judas was his own act; but that such an ACT should exist, is to be ascribed

* Diat. 1232. "—necessitatem consequentiæ, consequentis necessitatem." . . . . .

to the omnipotence of the Divine agency, precisely as all other things are*. We must never give up this,—that God cannot lie,—that God cannot be deceived. The learned in all ages may have been blind, but there is no obscurity, no ambiguity here †." CENT. XVI.

4. FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ON THE CONTROVERSY.

THE objections of Erasmus at bottom were levelled, no doubt, at the doctrine of the total depravity of human nature. Occasionally an expression escapes him, which is full to this point. For example: "The propensity which is in most men to evil, though it is not to be overcome without the help of Divine grace, yet does not entirely destroy their liberty. If that were so, why is time given for repentance? why even a hundred and twenty years afforded to the Antediluvians, if no portion of men's repentance depended on their own wills? Again, the case of Cornelius the centurion proves, that a man, before the reception of grace, may, through God's help, prepare himself, by the performance of good moral actions, for the Divine favour, though he be not yet baptized, nor hath obtained the gift of the Holy Ghost. For if all Cornelius's actions, before this last gift of the Spirit was bestowed upon him, were bad actions, one might ask, whether bad actions can be the cause of procuring us the favour of God ‡?"

* Erasmus owns, in Diat. 1232, that there is no denying that the Divine operation must concur in the production of every action; and for this reason, because every action implies a real existence of something, and even of something good. This concession, I conceive, provided Erasmus had been consistent with himself throughout, is the whole of what Luther, or any other person of Luther's sentiments, would or could desire.

† Luth. 461—3. ‡ Diat. 1236.

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Luther replies,—"The very same objection may be made to all the precepts of God; namely, why do you issue commands where there is not a power to obey? whereas, the design of the commands is, to instruct and to admonish; in order, that men may know their duty, be humbled on account of their defects, and, as I said before, have recourse to grace and mercy. I also, as well as Erasmus, have read the Acts of the Apostles, but not one syllable do I find there, which indicates that Cornelius's actions without the Holy Spirit were morally good. This is a mere dream of the Diatribe: the contrary is the fact. He is called a just man, and one that feared God. Now to say, that there can be, without the Holy Ghost, a just man, and one that fears God, is to say that Belial is Christ Jesus. Be it so, that Cornelius was not then baptized, and had not heard of the resurrection of Christ; does it follow he had not had the gift of the Holy Ghost? you may just as well say, that John the Baptist, and his parents, and the mother of our Lord, and Simeon, had not received the Holy Ghost*."

It may be useful to give a short specimen of the manner in which these theological combatants respectively manage the very difficult and delicate subject of the Divine and human co-operation. "There are passages in St. Paul," says Erasmus, "which appear to take away every particle of freedom: for example, 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, as to think any thing of ourselves: our sufficiency is of God.' 2 Cor. iii. But there are two ways of supporting my side of the question. 1. Some very orthodox fathers divide human actions into three parts; thought, choice, and execution. They allow there is no room for liberty in the first and third. Grace alone implants good thoughts, and grace alone finishes the work; but in the middle

* Luth. 468—9.

part, namely, the choice, there is a co-operation of grace and the will; though even in that co-operation, it is allowed, that the principal part of the effect is due to grace. 2. The other way of getting rid of the difficulty, consists in taking notice of the force of the very peculiar expression used by St. Paul, ----'as to think any thing as of ourselves,' that is, as from ourselves. Surely a man might use such an expression, who allowed the natural powers of the Will to be sufficiently efficacious to choose the good, since these very powers are the gift of God; and so St. Paul frequently checks a disposition to pride and arrogance,—'what hast thou, that thou hast not received?' Nay, the declaration that God works in us, both to will and to do, is consistent with freedom; for it is added, according to OUR GOOD WILLS; that is, our good wills co-operating with the grace of God. This is Ambrose's interpretation of the passage *; and is the more probable, because, a little before, we are exhorted to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling; words, which undoubtedly teach us, that both God works, and man works.—But how can man be said to work, if his will be in the hands of God, what clay is in the hands of the potter †?"

Luther's observations on the same subject merit our particular attention. "I grant," says he, "that Erasmus has proved that the creature co-operates with the Creator in his operations. But what has our present controversy to do with any questions concerning co-operation? The orator was to have harangued concerning a palm, but his whole discourse has been about a gourd. Or, as Horace

* On looking into Ambrose, I do not perceive the least ground for understanding him in this sense. His words are, "pro bonâ voluntate," without the possessive pronoun; and so it is in the original, ὑπερ της ευδοκιας, which is very properly translated, "of his good pleasure," Philipp. ii. 13.

† Eras. 1238, 1239.

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says, 'the potter began to make a cask, but produced a pitcher in the end.'

"We know very well that St. Paul co-operated with God in teaching the Corinthians, when HE preached to them publicly, and when God, at the same time, influenced them internally by his Spirit. God is the universal agent in every thing: even the wicked are subservient to his will. The difference between the co-operation of the wicked and the good is, that the former are devoid of all spiritual principle, whereas the latter, as St. Paul says, are led by the Holy Ghost.

"Our present inquiry, however, is not concerning what we can do THROUGH GOD'S HELP, but what is the extent of our natural powers without the Divine assistance; and whether we can of ourselves in any measure prepare ourselves for the new creation by the Spirit. To this single point Erasmus ought to have adhered.

"My undisguised sentiments are these.—Man, before he is created, can do nothing in any way to promote his creation. Neither after his creation can he do any thing to preserve his existence. Both his creation and his preservation are the result of the sole pleasure of the omnipotent and gracious energy of God; nevertheless, God does not operate in us, without making use of us, as beings whom he hath created and preserved for the express purpose of a mutual co-operation; namely, that he should work in us, and we co-operate with him. The very same is to be said of the NEW creature. The man before he is renewed by the Spirit can do nothing, can attempt nothing, to prepare himself for this new creation. Neither after he is renewed, can he effect any thing, to insure a perseverance in his new state. The Spirit of God alone doth both these things,—he both renews and preserves the renewed, without any aid on our part; as St. James, speaking of the new creature, says, 'of his own will he begat us by

the word of his power.' But here also it must be remembered, that he does not operate in the renewed, without using them as beings purposely renewed and preserved, that he should work in them, and they co-operate with him. For example: he makes use of them to preach, to pity the poor, to comfort the afflicted. But what does Erasmus's notion of the Will gain by all this,—except an absolute confutation?

"I would not," continues he, "attribute malice or bad motives to the author of the Diatribe, but I think he can scarcely be deemed sound and sober, when he attempts to prove the freedom of the Will by magnifying the efficacy of Divine grace. Every action of man, says he, may become good through the assistance of the grace of God *. This is the inference of Erasmus, from a selection out of the Gospels and St. Paul's Epistles, of a number of very beautiful similitudes and parables, which imply the Divine assistance and co-operation †. Far be it from me to deny this; but then, from the very same passages of Scripture, I infer, that though a man with the grace of God may surmount all difficulties, yet without that assistance he can do no good works whatever. He who could undertake to support the notion of Free Will by such Scriptures as speak highly of the efficacy of divine grace, must surely look upon men as senseless stocks and stones. Yet Erasmus has not only done this, but he also boasts in the most triumphant manner as if he had gained a complete victory. This proceeding, however, of my opponent, has given me some insight into the nature and power of the liberty for which he contends. It is no less than a species of insanity. For what else, I beg, but Free Will could induce a man to talk in this manner ‡?

* Eras. 1241. † Ib. 1235. 1239, and 1241.

‡ Luth. 474. 6.

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"I would that Erasmus would mark the consequences of his own reasoning: Scripture extols the assistance of divine grace, therefore Scripture confirms the doctrine of Free Will. By what logic does he argue thus, and not directly the contrary? For example: Divine grace, and the assistance of it, are preached and magnified; therefore there is no room for Free Will. For to what purpose should grace be conferred? Is it for this, that the pride of a Free-willer, already sufficiently haughty, should, like a bacchanalian in his riots, boast and exult in the possession of the gift of grace, as if it were to him a superfluous and unnecessary ornament?

"Wherefore, though I am no orator, yet my rhetoric is, in this instance, sounder than that of the Diatribe, when I affirm, that all the passages of Scripture—and they are innumerable—which take notice of Divine help, are so many arguments for the inability of man. For the very reason, why grace is necessary, and why divine help is afforded, is, that the human powers can of themselves do nothing, or, in other words, do not avail to choose the good. An inference this, which the gates of hell can never subvert."

Luther concludes his reply to the Diatribe in the following manner. "The system of Erasmus proceeds upon the principle of allowing some little to the powers of fallen man; and I believe his intention to be good; as he thereby hopes to remove some difficulties and inconveniences, and to reconcile certain apparently contradictory passages in Scripture. But the system entirely fails in its object: for, unless you ascribe a perfect and complete ability to the human will, as the Pelagians do, the appearance of several contradictions in Scripture, and also all the difficulties which are raised respecting reward and merit, and the mercy and justice of God, remain in full force, notwithstanding this

petty allowance of power to the wills of men. We must therefore go the full length of denying to fallen creatures the existence of any power to do good works without the grace of God: On this plan, we shall find no contradictions in the sacred pages; and if there should remain some difficulties, in consequence of ascribing all events to God, we shall still know precisely what the difficulties are, and modestly submit to be ignorant of what we cannot understand *. CENT. XVI.

"But, my Erasmus, never believe that I defend my side of the question from passion rather than from conviction. I cannot bear your insinuation that I think one thing and write another, or, that, in the heat of defence, I contradict my former assertions. My publications prove, that to this hour I have constantly maintained the natural inability of man. The truth has been my only motive. The charge of being vehement I submit to, if indeed I am to be blamed on that account: at the same time, I cannot but rejoice that there is such testimony for me in the cause of God, and I pray God it may be found so at the last day. For well will it be then for Luther to have the full testimony of the age in which he lived, that he defended the cause of truth not indolently nor deceitfully, but with sufficient warmth, or, perhaps, a little too much. Then shall I happily escape the threatening of Jeremiah, 'Cursed is he who doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully.'

"And if you shall judge me too severe upon your Diatribe, you must excuse me. I harbour not the least ill-will towards you. My sole motive is, to prevent you from injuring exceedingly the cause of Christ BY YOUR AUTHORITY; though it be vain for you to attempt it, either by your learning, or manner of treating the subject.—Besides, let me

* Luth. 474. 6.

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ask, what writer has his pen under such complete dominion that it never breaks out into excess? You yourself, who, by aiming at moderation, have become almost frigid in this little tract, yet frequently shoot bitter and fiery darts; insomuch, that your reader must be very candid, and very much in your favour, to acquit you of the charge of virulence. However, all this is nothing to the question between us: as men, we ought to be sensible of our infirmities, and mutually to forgive one another*."

5. Luther's arguments from St. Paul and St. John.

To the preceding reply to the objections contained in the Diatribe of Erasmus, Luther thought it expedient to subjoin a few striking passages from the New Testament, with a short comment upon them,—as follows:

"To produce all those Scriptures which prove the original inability of man, would be almost to transcribe the Sacred Writings. Whole armies are at hand; but I shall confine myself to the production of two Generals, namely, Paul the Apostle, and John the Evangelist.

"The language of the former is, that 'the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,—to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile.' These words have no ambiguity in them; they prove that the Gospel is absolutely necessary to save men from the anger of God. Again, 'Both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin: there is none that doeth good, no not one: all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.' And, 'The wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness.' Here it is for Erasmus to point out the exceptions,

* Luth. 475.

either among the Jews or the Greeks. What! not one among those two excellent nations who endeavoured to attain the Honestum? Not one who exerted to good purpose those natural powers you contend for? St. Paul is peremptory, declaring them all under the wrath of God. CENT. XVI.

"Moreover, experience confirms this account. Produce the best men that ever lived. Is there any one of them who ever dreamt of that wrath of God which is here said by St. Paul to be revealed from heaven against all ungodliness? Or, who ever suspected that the road to justification and salvation is by believing on the God-man who died for sin, rose again, and now sits at the right hand of God? Read what the greatest philosophers have thought and written concerning the anger of God against sin, in a future life. Examine what the Jews, who had so many signal advantages, thought of the true way of salvation. They not only rejected it, but have hated it to such a degree, that no nation under heaven has persecuted Christ so atrociously, even until this day. Yet, will any man say, that, among such multitudes, there has not been one who has cultivated his natural ability, or endeavoured to make the best of his Free Will? How is it, that this most excellent faculty of Free Will should, in no one instance of the very best men, have led to the discovery of the way of justification? How is it, that the very best Free-willers have not only been quite ignorant of it, but, even after that it was revealed to them, have rejected it with the greatest hatred? So St. Paul, 'It became a stumbling-block unto the Jews, and to the Greeks foolishness.' —I say then, this natural ability, or Free Will, which you contend for, as far as it respects religion, is the greatest possible enemy to the salvation of men. It cannot be but that some Jews or Gentiles have endeavoured to make the most of this

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boasted faculty, and yet they have been at constant war with the grace of God.

"Let Erasmus now tell me, how the wills of natural men can be said to exert some degree of endeavour towards the good, when it thus appears that they esteem the righteousness of God to be either a stumbling-block or foolishness."

Luther makes great use of the important doctrine of justification by faith, as stated by St. Paul; but it would detain us too long were we to dwell upon all the passages which he produces from this apostle. He argues thus from Romans iii. 19. "'Every mouth must be stopped, and all the world must become guilty before God.' But not so, if a man by nature possesses a power of discharging in any degree his duty to God. Such a one may say to the Almighty, 'There is a something which you cannot condemn:—you have furnished me with a power to do something; and, as far as this goes, there is no guilt; and my mouth will not be stopped.'" And certainly, if the human Will be a well-disposed and efficacious faculty, it is not true that the whole world must be reckoned guilty before God; for this very faculty is by no means a slight matter, or confined to a small part of the world: whereas the WHOLE world is pronounced guilty before God. The expression is so general, that neither the whole conduct, nor any part of the conduct of a man, of men, or of a number of men, can, by possibility, be here excepted.

On the next verse, 'Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God,' Luther observes, that Jerome had ignorantly been the cause of introducing into the world a very erroneous and very mischievous idea, namely, that, by the works of the law St. Paul intended only the works of the ceremonial law. "Augustine," says he, "excellently withstood this false

comment: nevertheless, through the prevalence of Satan, it has spread very much, and keeps its ground to this day." CENT. XVI.

Here Luther opposes Jerome, and supports Augustine with great perspicuity and strength of argument.

As the Reader of this History is well aware that there is no part of religious truth which was nearer the heart of Luther, or which he had studied more intensely, than the doctrine of justification by faith, he will not be surprised to find this great Reformer combating with all his might such notions of the natural faculties of man, as he conceived to be utterly subversive of this fundamental article. Erasmus's defence of Free Will he understood to be, in effect, a struggle to establish in mens characters some degree of merit, be it more or less: and such an attempt, according to Luther's ideas, militated directly against the important doctrine just mentioned. He asks, therefore, "What can the advocates for the free powers of man say to the declaration of St. Paul, 'Being justified FREELY by his grace?' Freely: what does that word mean? How are good endeavours and merit consistent with a gratuitous donation? Perhaps you do not insist on a merit of condignity, but only of congruity: Empty distinctions! Nay, Erasmus owns, that he defends Free Will in order that he may find some place for merits: and he is perpetually expostulating, that, where there is no liberty, there can be no merit; and where there is no merit, there is no room for reward. To be brief, St. Paul represents justification as a perfectly free gift, without any consideration of merit; and that along with this free gift are bestowed also the kingdom of God and life eternal. Then, where are the desires, the endeavours, the merits of Free Will? and what are their uses? Suppose we admit that the advocates of Free Will allow only exceedingly little to

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that faculty; they nevertheless make that little the foundation of justification, because they represent the grace of God as obtained by that little. Indeed they have no other method of answering the question, Why does God justify one man, and not another? but by having recourse to the different use which they suppose men to make of their Free Will; namely, that in one case there are exertions, in the other no exertions; and that God approves of one man on account of his exertions, and punishes the other for the neglect of them; not to say that they imagine he would be unjust if he did otherwise. Thus our gracious God is described as a respecter of works, of merits, and of persons; —and thus, whatever may be pretended to the contrary, the dignity of merits is maintained and inculcated: for, indeed, our opponents do deny that they hold a merit that has any worthiness in it;—all that they hold is, a merit which has the effect of a dignity or worthiness. What a wretched evasion! There is hardly any word one might not play upon in that way. Thus, the thorn is not a bad tree, it only produces the effects of a bad tree: The fig-tree is not a good tree, but has the effects of a good tree:—The Diatribe has nothing in it of the nature of ungodliness; it only speaks and acts as ungodly persons do."

"In my judgment," continues Luther, "my opponents are at bottom worse than the Pelagians. The Pelagians speak plainly and openly: they call a thorn a thorn, and a fig a fig. They ingenuously assert a real worthiness in their merits; and by this worthiness or dignity of merit they purchase the favour of God. Whereas, those with whom I have to do, imagine that the favour of God is to be bought at a very small price, namely, the meritorious use of that extremely small degree of liberty, which has escaped the wreck of our original depravity. But how does St. Paul, in one word, confound in

one mass all the assertors of every species and of every degree of merit! 'All are justified freely, and without the works of the law.' He who affirms the justification of all men who are justified, to be perfectly free and gratuitous, leaves no place for works, merits, or preparations of any kind; no place for works either of condignity or of congruity; and thus, at one blow, he demolishes both the Pelagians with their complete merits, and our Sophists with their petty performances." CENT. XVI.

Our author then proceeds to take notice, That St. John, "who makes havoc," he says, "every where, of the doctrine of an innate free propensity to good," at the very outset of his Gospel attributes so great blindness to our natural dispositions, that we do not even see the light, so far are we from making any exertions to come to it. 'The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.' "Let us attend to the case of Nicodemus, who may justly be esteemed an example of the utmost that the mere powers of nature could accomplish.—In what desire, or in what exertion, I pray, does this character appear to have been deficient? He owned Jesus to be a messenger from God; he was struck with his miracles, and he applied to him for instruction. Does not HE appear, it may be said, to have sought salvation through the impulse of his natural faculties? But mark how he blunders. As soon as he learns from Christ the true way of salvation by being born again, he is so far from being pleased with the important information, that he discovers an aversion to it, and thinks the thing impossible. Nor is this any more than an instance of what happens daily. All the human faculties, both of the understanding and the will, nay, the whole world itself, it must be confessed, fell short of the knowledge of Christ before the preaching of the Gospel. Yet Christ is the way,

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the truth, and the life. What insanity, then, to pretend that there remain nevertheless in our fallen nature, sufficient powers to direct our application to the things which concern our eternal salvation!

"Again, St. John pronounces unbelievers to be in a state of condemnation, because they believe not on the only-begotten Son of God. Now tell me at once, whether the human will can or cannot make a believer. If it can, then there is no need of the grace of God. If it cannot, then the unbeliever, with this very faculty of freedom, is condemned already before God. But God condemns nothing except ungodliness. I may well ask, therefore, what pious efforts towards salvation can ungodliness be supposed to make."

Luther concludes his whole treatise with two or three concise observations: thus;

Obs. 1. "One of the most invincible arguments in favour of the depravity of the human will is to be found in my former publications, and it has not been noticed by the Diatribe.—St. Paul teaches both the Romans and the Galatians, that there is in holy men a strong contest between the flesh and the spirit, so that they cannot do the things which they would. From this statement I argued thus: If the nature of man is so bad, that, even in those who are renewed by the Spirit, it not only makes no effort to do good, but, on the contrary, fights against the gracious affections; how can it be supposed to have, in those who are not born again, but are slaves of Satan, the least tendency whatever to virtuous endeavours or exertions.

"I could wish Erasmus to try his strength in answering this argument.

"For my part, I freely own, I have not the smallest desire, if the thing could be granted, that my salvation should depend in any degree upon myself; not only because, in contending against many dangers, and difficulties, and evil spirits,

I should fail of success, but because, even if there were not these, I should be in a constant state of uncertainty. For, were I to live and labour to eternity, my conscience would never feel sure that I had done enough to secure the favour of God. Whatever I did, there would always be this scruple left; Is this enough, or does not God require something more? All self-righteous persons know this to be their case; and I also, to my great loss, have sufficiently experienced the same for many years.

"But now that my salvation depends upon a gracious and merciful God, I rest assured that he is faithful, and will never deceive me; and at the same time, that he is so great and powerful, that neither adversities nor wicked spirits can hurt me. I do not ground my security on the merit of my works, but on the divine promises of mercy."

Obs. 2. "The difficulty which arises in the minds of some, from the consideration of the punishment of the wicked, may be relieved in some measure by such reflections as these: God is to be honoured and adored as evidently most merciful to those ungodly persons whom he justifies and saves: and surely so much credit should be given to the Divine wisdom as that we may believe God to be just, though to us, in some instances, he may appear the contrary: But—you cannot comprehend how a just God can condemn those who are born in sin, and cannot help themselves, but must, by a necessity of their natural constitution, continue in sin, and remain children of wrath. The answer is, God is incomprehensible throughout; and therefore his justice as well as his other attributes must be incomprehensible. It is on this very ground that St. Paul exclaims, 'O the depth of the riches and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!' Now his judgments would not be past finding out, if we could always perceive them to be just.

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"Does not common sense compel us to own, that human wisdom, knowledge, strength, and power, dwindle as it were into nothing, when compared with the corresponding attributes of God? What folly and perverseness then, to dispute the point with him respecting his justice and judgment, and arrogantly to rejudge his decisions! What! shall we submit to the Divine Majesty in all matters but one, and call his fidelity in question in the attribute of justice, even when he has absolutely promised that the time shall come when he will reveal his glory, in such a manner, that all may see clearly, and be completely satisfied that he is, and always has been, just and holy in all his ways?"

Obs. 3. "Again: The Divine administration of the world does not please you. You suspect God to be unjust, or you are tempted to think there is no God. The wicked, in many instances, thrive; and the good are unsuccessful. This consideration very much afflicted Job, David, Jeremiah, Asaph, &c. Yet this great difficulty, perfectly insurmountable by nature and reason, gives way at once to a single ray of evangelical light, which teaches us that there is a future life, in which the wicked will be punished, and the righteous rewarded.—Then I reason thus: if the light of the Gospel, by a single word with FAITH, has so very easily resolved a difficulty which has proved distressing to thinking men in all ages, how clear will every thing be, when faith and the written word shall be no more, and the Divine Majesty itself shall be revealed! Do not you think that the brightness of the glory of God may very easily resolve a doubt which could not be resolved by the light of revelation, when you have an instance of the light of revelation clearing up a difficulty insuperable by the light of nature? Observe; the common distinction is a good one: there are three lights, one of nature, another of grace, and a third of glory. The light of nature cannot explain why

a good man should suffer, and a bad man should flourish; but the light of grace solves the difficulty. Then, the light of grace does not inform us why God should punish an ungodly man, who cannot by any powers of his own amend his disposition. Nay, I will own that both the light of nature and of grace incline us to excuse the poor wretched man, and to think hardly of God, and as unjust in his judgments; especially as he gives a crown of glory to another, who, by nature, is quite as ungodly, and perhaps more so. But remember, that the light of glory teaches us a different thing; namely, that the ways of God, which are incomprehensible at present, will, at the last day, appear most manifestly to be strictly just, and holy in the very highest degree.

"I am ready to go farther into this question, if it should be necessary:—but at present I conclude,

"That if we believe the prescience of God, there can be no faculty of contingency in man, or angel, or any creature, whereby the Divine Will can be obstructed.

"That if we believe Satan to be the prince of this world, there can be no deliverance from his slavery but by the power of the Holy Ghost. And this is another proof of the entire depravity of human nature.

"That if the Jews, aiming at righteousness by their own strength, have fallen into a state of ungodliness and condemnation; and if the ungodly Gentiles have, through the free mercy of God, attained to a state of righteousness and justification, it is very plain, from experience, that without the grace of God the human will is inclined to evil, and to evil only.

"On the whole, if we believe that Christ has redeemed us by his blood, we are compelled to confess that man was completely in a state of perdition, otherwise we make Christ of none effect: or, if we do admit his efficiency, still we allow him to be

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the Redeemer only of a very bad part of human nature; and maintain, that there is a better part, which stands in need of no redemption,—a supposition too blasphemous to be admitted.

"And now, my Erasmus, I call upon you to fulfil the promise you made,—that you would yield to any one who should teach you better doctrines. Lay aside all respect for persons. You are a great man, I confess, and are furnished by God with many of the noblest accomplishments:—to mention nothing else, you are a miracle in genius, erudition, and eloquence. As to myself, I can say nothing, except that I ALMOST GLORY in being a Christian.

"I most exceedingly commend you, forasmuch as that you are the only one who, among all my adversaries in this religious cause, has attempted to handle the real matter in dispute: nor have you fatigued me with extraneous matter about the papacy, purgatory, indulgences, and such like trifles, about which I have hitherto been hunted on all sides to no purpose. You and only you have seen the true hinge upon which all turned, and have aimed your blow at the throat. On this account I can sincerely thank you; for I employ what leisure I have very agreeably on this subject. I wish the wild Anabaptists, who boast of new revelations, were following your example; we should have fewer sectaries and less sedition, and more peace and harmony.

"At the same time I must say, that, unless you could treat your subject in a different manner from what you have done in your Diatribe, I most earnestly wish you had confined yourself to your own peculiar gift, by which you have already done so much good, and gained so much applause: I mean, that you should continue to cultivate, and improve, and adorn polite literature. In this you have been of use to myself; and therefore, while I look up to you with wonder and veneration, I own myself under considerable personal obligation to you.

"But it has not pleased God to qualify you for the great business we have in hand.—I entreat you not to suppose this to be an effusion of pride. I pray that the time may be near, when the Lord shall make you as much superior to me in this concern of the Reformation, as you are already in every thing else. However, it is no new thing, if God should teach Moses by Jethro, or Paul by Ananias. You say you have missed your aim, if you have Christ yet to learn; and I do suspect you begin to think that this may possibly be the case. You are but a man; and it is not very unlikely, but after all, you may not have rightly apprehended the Scriptures and the Fathers, to which you think you have trusted as sure guides. Your own very doubtful way of speaking leads me to think so. You say, "you assert nothing, but only discourse and argue." A man does not express himself so who has got hold of his subject right, and understands it to the bottom. In this book of mine, I do not merely discourse or dispute, but I have asserted, and do assert, and I submit to nobody's judgment whatever, but exhort every one to obey the Divine truths which I maintain.

"May the Lord, whose cause it is, illuminate you, and make you a vessel of honour and glory! Amen."

The student of the history of Luther has frequent occasion to remark, that, notwithstanding the violence and asperity of the language of this great Reformer on many occasions, he was rarely betrayed into rash and intemperate actions. Is it possible to devise more prudential maxims of conduct, than those by which, in the main, he appears to have been directed in his dealings with Erasmus*? Perfectly aware of his influence and reputation as a scholar, and of his defects as a man of practical religion, he

* See page 267.

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dreaded his opposition and enmity to the Reformation, but had little hopes of deriving advantage from his friendship. How then did it become Luther to act on such an occasion? For a long time he treated him with kindness and respect; and, in attempts to secure his neutrality at least, went quite as far as conscience would permit him: and even on the very eve of a rupture, and after many peevish and inimical declarations on the part of Erasmus, he omitted not to make a wise and animated effort to prevent open hostilities, by writing that celebrated letter, which is already before the Reader in the Appendix *; every line of which displays the spirit of a man who sincerely wished for peace, but who, at the same time, in case of being attacked, was conscious of his own powers of defence and resistance. AFTER the publication of the Diatribe, Luther had nothing left but to consider Erasmus as an avowed adversary, and with all his might to aim at lowering his reputation, by exposing his incompetency in theological inquiries.

6. THE REPLY OF ERASMUS. HYPERASPISTES.

ERASMUS affected to resent nothing in Luther's reply, but his uncivil and acrimonious language. How far this was really so, must be left to the Reader's judgment. Certainly he discovered an uncommon anxiety to be esteemed victorious on this occasion; and gave reason to suspect that he had received deeper wounds in his conflict with the Saxon divine, than it is usually in the power of mere hard words or abuse to inflict. He printed his rejoinder in two parts †; and in his advertisement to the former of them he tells us, that, through the management of the Lutherans, he had been allowed but ten days before the Fair of Frankfort for the composition of it; and that if any one distrusted

* See page 268. † Called Hyperaspistes.

this assertion, there were, at Basil, very positive witnesses of its truth. He says, he had hastened the publication to check the triumph of his adversaries; and then bids his Reader farewell; assuring him, in so many explicit terms, that, in the perusal of his book, he may expect to find an indisputable superiority of argument. CENT. XVI.

Throughout both the books of the Hyperaspistes, one cannot but notice numerous indications of anger and irritation. The kind and complimentary expressions of Luther, as well as the tribute of praise therein paid to his adversary's talents and attainments, the sincerity of which there could be no good reason to suspect, he represents as the honey of a poisoned cup, or the sting accompanying a serpent's embrace.

On the whole, there can be no doubt but the controversy with Luther was eventually the cause of much pain and vexation to Erasmus. His greatest admirers allow that the Diatribe is a feeble and timid production, and unworthy of its author. Accordingly, it gave offence to both parties, was esteemed by neither, and disappointed all the learned. Even Jortin observes, that those who shall carefully peruse the writings of Erasmus on HUMAN LIBERTY, will see that he had not the clearest and precisest notions. In fact, Erasmus himself was well aware of his unfitness for this business, and, in a letter to the bishop of Rochester, ingenuously owns, that he was not on his own ground while writing on the Freedom of the Will*. And, in another letter to a friend, he goes so far as to say, "But, to confess the truth, we have lost Free Will. There my mind dictated one thing, and my pen wrote another." This is undoubtedly an incautious expression; and it has been produced as a proof of the insincerity of Erasmus in his dispute

* Beausobre, V. 132. and Jortin, 335.

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with Luther*. It seems, however, uncandid to construe the preceding declaration of the author of the Diatribe so much to his disadvantage, as to suppose that he wrote against his conscience on that occasion; especially as it is the constant strain of his letters about that time, that he had written the Diatribe against Luther very unwillingly, yet very sincerely. To Melancthon, on the subject of the Diatribe, he writes, "I have handled the points in dispute with the greatest possible moderation, yet not in any way contrary to my real opinion; though I am ready to give that up, as soon as any one shall convince me that a different opinion is nearer the truth†." To his friend Henry Stromer he describes the state of his mind as follows: "I who have spent all my time among the Muses, am now compelled to engage in this bloody contest. It could not be otherwise. There was a cry that Erasmus and Luther had agreed to preserve mutual silence. Then I dared no longer to disappoint the expectation of the Princes. Add, that the Lutherans provoked and threatened me, insomuch that my silence would have been attributed to fear. The die is cast, yet so, that I have not written a single word on Free Will contrary to my real sentiments.—There are many of my countrymen who favour Luther: but if I had foreseen that this new gospel would have given rise to such a set of brawlers, I would have been an avowed enemy of the whole faction from the very beginning."

In the same letter he declares that he had ceased to be a free agent from the moment that he had published a book upon Free Will; and that he had wished to have remained a mere spectator of the new scenes, not from any backwardness to support the church to the utmost, but because the ecclesiastical differences were about paradoxical propositions. "The Christian world," he said, "was

* Jortin, 413; Seck. 310; and Ep. 985. † Ep. 820.

become so excessively corrupt, that even if he had thought very ill of Luther, he almost judged him to be a necessary evil; and that, therefore, to take him away, was to take away what was best in the present circumstances." But now at Basil, says he, "the novel gospel has produced a quite new race of men, who are obstinate, impudent, and abusive; who are cheats, liars, and hypocrites; they quarrel among one another; they are disobliging and troublesome to the last degree; they are seditious and wild; they brawl and jangle; and, in short, are so disagreeable to me, that if I knew of any town perfectly free from them, I would certainly go and live there*."

This is one of the numerous passages in the publications of the author of the Diatribe which prove how possible it is for a man so far to bridle his bad passions, as to write on some occasions with extraordinary mildness and diffidence, and yet at the same time overflow internally with a bitter and acrimonious spirit. It appears there was no need of Luther's severe animadversions to excite the enmity of Erasmus against the reformers. His treatise, however, on the Bondage of the Will, certainly had the effect of rendering his hostilities, ever after, more open and irreconcilable.

In general, Luther's style in Latin is far from being correct or polished; but, on this occasion, he had taken so much pains, as to make Erasmus believe he had been assisted by his learned friends, and especially by Melancthon. He admits, as we observed before, that his performance is an elaborate work, composed with the greatest care; at the same time, he pronounces it virulent, scurrilous, and malicious, and such as no man would have written against a Turk. "All the learning," says he, "and all the abuse, which the church of Wit-

* Ep. 835.

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temberg could produce, is in this book. Never did Luther rage against any one more like a madman. It is a large volume, and has been translated into German, for the purpose of exasperating ploughmen, coblers, and weavers, against me *. What is become of the pacific Erasmus? compelled to turn gladiator in his old age, and, what is worse, compelled to fight wild beasts †." Thus it appears that this elegant scholar could sometimes use hard words, as well as Luther; and though it is very true that the latter, in his reply, treated him with a mixture of compliment, praise, scorn, insult, ridicule, and invective,—and all without much ceremony,—the discerning Reader may be allowed to doubt, whether Erasmus, in his heart, was not more provoked at the excellencies of his adversary's composition, than at any abuse which it contained.

He may doubt, also, whether Erasmus would be more pleased upon finding afterwards that Melancthon had not joined Luther in his attack upon the Diatribe, or vexed to see that Luther, without that assistance, was able to furnish so finished a reply. —Melancthon, both in letters to his own particular friend Camerarius, and to Erasmus himself, denies the charge. To the former he says, "I do not in the least merit the heavy charge he lays upon me; but I have resolved to stifle the affront." To the latter he acknowledges his obligations, and exhorts Erasmus never to give way to such unfriendly suspicions of him, as were to be found in the first part of his Hyperaspistes.—In effect, this latter displays a little of the timid trimming temper of Melancthon, which NATURALLY resembled in some degree that of Erasmus himself; but—religious principles were lively and efficient in the former. To Camerarius he begins his letter thus: "Did you

* I. Hyper. 1305.

† To Sylvius. To Reginald Pole. To the Bishop of Langres, 918, 919.

ever read a more bitter publication than this of Erasmus?" He calls it Hyperaspistes, but "it is absolutely aspis," that is, a wasp *. CENT. XVI.

But that, which more than all the rest demonstrates the excessive irritation of the mind of Erasmus, is a letter to John, the new elector of Saxony; in which he begs that Luther may be punished, or at least admonished, for having charged him with holding atheistical or Epicurean opinions. The MS. is among the Archives of Weimar, subscribed in the hand-writing of Erasmus; thus: "I, Erasmus of Rotterdam, the most devoted servant of your most serene Electoral Highness, have subscribed this with my own hand." It is said to abound with an incredible bitterness against Luther, whom the author represents as having injured his reputation, by propagating criminal falsehoods.—Among the same papers at Weimar, there is a letter of Luther's, which should seem to have been written to the Elector on that occasion, to the following effect: "That to himself and his colleagues it did not seem wise for the Elector to intermeddle with a business which was purely ecclesiastical, and in which he neither could be, nor wished to be, the judge; and that it was the duty of Erasmus to give him no trouble about it. That, moreover, if the question was really of a political nature, it required the judgment of a greater tribunal than that of any prince whatever, and therefore Erasmus ought to have addressed the whole world in general. And, lastly, That it was unjust to punish any person upon the accusation of a private letter; that an action ought to be instituted, the forms of law observed, and an opportunity of defence afforded †." . . . . . One may well ask, Where is now

Erasmus writes to the Elector of Saxony.

* Ep. 1071. To Camer. lib. iv. 28. p. 636. Eras. et Melan. Ep. Lond.

† Comment. de Luth. 312.

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the mild and gentle spirit of Erasmus, who so constantly boasts of having dissuaded princes and prelates from using cruelty and persecution?

The author of Hyperaspistes, at the time of writing his book, was not in a temper to throw much light upon so difficult a subject as that of the Freedom of the human Will.—Pride, anger, and chagrin, may give rise to severe and satirical criticisms, and even quicken the penetration, but never strengthen the judgment.

Erasmus informs us of his reasons for proceeding to write a second book of the Hyperaspistes. The moderation of his Diatribe was construed by some into a collusion with Luther. They said he had spared his adversary, and they called him timid and frigid. Even after his skirmish in the first book of Hyperaspistes, there were persons who still termed the controversy a collusion. "Then his friends," he added, "pressed him with having promised to go on; and his enemies boasted that he had been beaten."

From this account of Erasmus himself, we cannot be much at a loss to comprehend what were the prevailing sentiments of mankind in his own time, respecting the success of his pen, in the attempt to lower the reputation of Luther *.—Observe what an indirect tribute of praise he unawares pays to his adversary, in the very first page of his second book of Hyperaspistes. "In what remains," says he, "we shall be less interrupted by his calumny and abuse: not that Luther can ever forget himself, but because THE DENSITY OF HIS ARGUMENTATION, and HIS NUMEROUS TESTIMONIES FROM SCRIPTURE, did not allow him so free a field for scurrilous language."

In regard to the Diatribe, it is rather historical than argumentative; and though in general extremely moderate and inoffensive, yet, in some

* Des. Eras. pio Lectori.

places, the writer bites so hard, that even Melancthon ventured to reprove him gently on that account *. CENT. XVI.

In the Hyperaspistes, the author accuses his adversary repeatedly of savageness, impudence, lying, and blasphemy. Strange! that a man who professed to dislike so very much the asperities of Luther, should abound in language of this sort! Let us hear him in a single sentence. "Luther promises himself a wonderful reputation with posterity: whereas I am rather inclined to prophesy that no name under the sun will ever be held in greater execration than the name of Luther..... The beginnings of the mischief he has done we have already seen in the Rustic War."——A notable instance this of the mildness and candour of Erasmus †! Yet, notwithstanding all this bitterness and acrimony, it is sufficiently plain, from many parts of his writings, that he by no means thought so ill of Luther as one might conclude from such passionate expressions as these. I will select a passage from his letter to the bishop of Lingen. "I am surprised to observe in Luther two distinct characters. Some of his writings appear to breathe the spirit of an Apostle: again, in scurrility and abuse who ever equalled him ‡?" And it should be observed, that Erasmus, in this very letter, is giving an account of Luther's answer to his Diatribe.

The first book of the Hyperaspistes is a hasty and passionate effusion, in which Erasmus reproaches Luther, times almost without number, for having abused and calumniated him in his reply to the Diatribe. The second book is abundantly more elaborate; and it is here that Erasmus exerted his utmost strength. In the Diatribe he was not a hearty combatant. He apologizes to Melancthon for

* "Perplacuit tua moderatio, tametsi alicubi nigrum salem adsperseris." Ep. 821. † Hyp. II. 1485.

‡ Ep. 919.—See also Vol. IV. Erasmus, Chap. II. Cent. XVI. near the end.

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appearing in the field against Luther in that instance, and accounts for the step from the peculiar circumstances in which he found himself entangled; and, if I mistake not, he would have been delighted if the affair had ended there, without any answer from Luther. In writing the first book of Hyperaspistes, he had no time to think; but, in the second, he was completely unfettered, and completely in earnest; and if he had been able, he would, without the least mercy, have trampled on Luther, and ground him to powder.

This second book is very long, and very tedious; but as it appears to me, the tediousness, of which every reader must complain, is not owing so much to the length of the performance, as to the confusion which pervades it throughout. The Writer is kept sufficiently alive, amidst great prolixity, by the unceasing irritation of his hostility and resentment; but the Reader is fatigued and bewildered, by being led through obscure paths one after another, and never arriving at any distinct and satisfactory conclusion. A close attention of the mind to a long series of confused and jumbled propositions, wearies the intellect, as infallibly as a continued exertion in looking at objects difficult to be distinguished, exhausts the powers of the most perfect organs of vision.

It is agreed, that on the subject of the Freedom of the Will, there are parts of the inquiry absolutely beyond all human comprehension. On these Luther scarcely touches, owning at once their difficulty. But not so Erasmus: and this is a remarkable distinction between the two writers.

Moreover, there is in Erasmus an ostentatious affectation of a superiority of scholastic knowledge, at the very time that he affects to dislike and despise it. For example, "I have either no eyes," says he, "or Luther does not understand the difference between a necessity of a consequence, and

a necessary consequence." And then, after having, with much parade, exposed, as he thinks, Luther's ignorance of the scholastic distinctions, and also having shown—what nobody ever can show—the manner by which the prescience of God may be consistent with the contingency of events, he contemptuously concludes thus: "I was conversant, when a boy, with these logical subtilties, though I neither liked, nor had much talent for them; but I had almost forgotten what I had learnt, and for that reason I did not much trouble the Reader about such things in my Diatribe. On the other hand, Luther, who has spent a great part of his life in these inquiries, never reasoned less to the purpose, or more like a madman, than in the use which he has made of this sort of knowledge *."

7. Scepticism of Erasmus.

Luther, in various parts of his Bondage of the Will, had more than insinuated, that Erasmus was unsound, not only in some of the great articles of the Christian faith, but even in the leading truths of Natural Religion. Erasmus took fire at this, and repeatedly declared the accusation to be the greatest of all possible calumnies. In particular, at the conclusion of the first book of his Hyperaspistes, he makes a declaration, with all imaginary solemnity, of his most entire and sincere faith in God and the Holy Scriptures.—However, as this great and learned man certainly stands in the early history of the Reformation as a very prominent character, it will be proper, before we conclude this detail, to lay briefly before the Reader, from his own writings, as well as from those of others, some additional testimonies, which have had weight with many orthodox divines, in inducing them to deny the soundness, and to suspect the sincerity, of this

* II. Hyp. 1427.

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eminent scholar. And here I would again suggest, what the discerning Reader cannot but already have collected from the intimations dispersed throughout this narrative, that the dispute between Luther and Erasmus is in reality not so much about the nature of human liberty, as the true Scriptural doctrine of Original Sin, and the efficacy of Divine Grace. These are properly the fundamental points of discussion; and it is only indirectly, and as it were by consequence, that the nature of the human Will becomes an object of inquiry.—This single observation is the key to a right understanding of many things which are advanced on both sides in this controversy.

1. In his Diatribe, Erasmus, with great coolness and deliberation, speaks of the Lutheran, and other divines of the same class, in the following terms. "They exaggerate Original Sin to such a prodigious degree, as to maintain, that men by nature can do nothing but express their ignorance and hatred of God; and that the works even of a justified man are sinful. Moreover, that propensity to evil, which is derived from our first parents, they consider both as a sinful and an invincible propensity. They appear to me, in describing salvation as all of Grace without works, to narrow the mercy of God in one way, while they extend it in another; as if a host should furnish his guests with a slender dinner, for the purpose of making a splendid show at supper; or as painters, who cast a shade over some objects, with an intention to make others look bright. Further, when, according to them, God lays on men the heavy load of so many commandments, which have no other effect but to make them hate him, and increase their own condemnation;—what is this, but to represent the Deity as more cruel than the tyrant Dionysius, who first enacted many laws which he foresaw would probably be broken, and then

connived at the defaulters for a time; and when almost all his subjects were become obnoxious to his penalties, began at length to inflict his punishments *?" CENT. XVI.

2. In the Hyperaspistes, on the same subject of Original Sin, he expresses himself thus: "I have shown that Paul, when he says we are children of wrath, may be understood to speak, not of men's condition by nature, but of the depraved state of their morals, into which they have voluntarily brought themselves. But grant that all men are children of wrath; still, it will not follow that sin predominates to such a degree as to have left no seeds of piety and virtue in mankind. Even in brute-animals we perceive some marks of goodness. Doves and turtles are chaste in their connexions; elephants are modest and religious; dogs are grateful; apes are pious towards their young; and bees and ants exhibit a political economy. Again, all men allow that they have derived from their first parents a propensity to sin, yet not in the same degree. Who goes so far ever as to charge with impiety, either infants, or even boys of a good disposition, that have not yet been spoiled by intercourse with the world? Every fault does not amount to impiety: even baptism does not entirely take away the propensity to sin; it only lessens it †."

3. How far Luther was justified in representing the author of the Diatribe as in reality a favourer of the sentiments of Lucian, Epicurus, and Porphyry, those will be the best judges who are most acquainted with the circumstances of the life of Erasmus, and the contents of his voluminous writings. From these, many passages may certainly be produced, which prove, that at least his religious faith was extremely loose and desultory, and his profession of certain doctrines the effect of custom and

* 1246. Diatr. † II. Hyp. 1401.

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convenience, rather than of judgment and decision.—Even in his controversy with Luther, he scruples not to admit that the point in dispute between them was not very near his heart: "If," says he, "you had overcome my Diatribe with strong arguments, you would not have offended me in the smallest degree; nay, you might perhaps have drawn me over to your opinion, for my mind is not so very averse to your sentiment, provided the schools only, and not the dogmas of the church also, stood in the way*."

A Letter of Erasmus to Ecolampadius.

A. D. 1525.

4. There is a short epistle of Erasmus, written in January 1525, to the very learned and excellent Reformer Ecolampadius, which throws more light on the real character and the secret motives of the writer, than many hundreds of pages from his voluminous publications. Erasmus and Ecolampadius had professed a regard for each other; and the former, it seems, had cautioned the latter not to injure the reputation of Erasmus by representing him as connected with the Reformers.—Now, Ecolampadius, in a preface to his Commentary on Isaiah, happened to use the expression, OUR GREAT ERASMUS†. This was a mighty offence; as leading to a suspicion that he and Erasmus were of the same opinion. He tells Ecolampadius plainly, that he would rather have been ILL treated by him, than brought forward in this way, as a friend of his party. His letter begins in this strain: "I pretend not to pass sentence on you; I leave that to the Lord; to whom ye must stand or fall. But this I reflect upon; namely, What do several great men think of you? the Emperor, the Pope, Ferdinand, the king of England, the bishop of Rochester, Cardinal Wolsey, and many others, whose authority it is not safe for me to contemn, neither is it prudent to despise their favour? You know very well there are some who look upon you

* I. Hyp. 1317. † Magnus Erasmus noster.

Reformers as heresiarchs and schismatics. Now what will such persons say, upon reading in your Preface the words, "OUR GREAT ERASMUS?" Will not the consequence be, that the dangerous suspicions of powerful princes, or implacable enemies, who had begun to think a little better of me since the publication of my Diatribe, will be all revived?" CENT. XVI.

The biographer and great admirer of Erasmus was much shocked with this letter *. Indeed, we here learn the reason why Erasmus was always so much provoked at the Reformers, whenever they intimated that his conduct was influenced by the fear of losing his pensions, or, in general, the patronage of the great.—From his own mouth he is convicted of the charge. In secret, he honoured and valued Ecolampadius; but dreaded to be commended by him. And wherefore? Lest he should thereby offend those very persons whom he despised in his heart.—What a wretched state of Bondage!!

Erasmus appears to have been under the influence of the same timid worldly spirit, soon after he had received from Luther that very animated letter, mentioned in page 268, which constrained him to confess to his friend Pirckeimer, that "Martin Luther had written to him in a strain sufficiently civil, but that he did not dare to answer him with equal civility, on account of his calumniators." He adds, "However, I did give him a short answer †." See this answer in page 269.

But there is another letter of Erasmus to the same friend, which one cannot read without astonishment. "I never maintained," says he, "that the opinion of Ecolampadius on the Eucharist was by *far the soundest. It is true*, that among some *friends I went so far as to say that I could adopt that sentiment*, if the authority of the church had

* Jortin, I. 369.

† Ep. 803, to Bilib. Pirckeimer, a Counsellor of Charles V.

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approved it; but I added, that I could by no means dissent from the church. By the church, I mean the consent of the body of Christian people. I know not how the hypocrites, whom you speak of, have represented my words. For my part, I certainly speak sincerely; nor have I ever doubted of the truth of the Eucharist. What weight the authority of the church may have with others, I cannot say; but with me it weighs so much, that I could be of the same opinion with the Arians and Pelagians, if the church had supported their doctrines. It is not that the words of Christ are not to me sufficient; but no one should be surprised if I follow the interpretation of the church, upon whose authority my belief of the Canonical Scriptures is founded. Others, perhaps, may have more genius and more courage than I have: but there is nothing in which I acquiesce more securely than in the decisive judgment of the church. OF REASONINGS AND ARGUMENTS THERE IS NO END."

This language, as it certainly needs no comment, so neither does it need much addition to be made to it, to show the real character of the writer *. It is this sort of language, repeatedly made use of, which has induced both many Protestants and many Roman Catholics to consider this eminent scholar either as a sceptic or a dissembler; notwithstanding his reiterated complaints of being calumniated, and his solemn declarations of the soundness of his faith †.

* Ep. 1029 & 941.

† Erasmus, in a letter to Pet. Barbirius, speaks in the highest terms of Ecolampadius's book; saying, "It is so accurately written, and contains so many arguments and testimonies, that it might deceive the very elect." Ep. 894.—We have already, in the Note to p. 240, referred to Erasmus's expostulations with the German reformer Conrad Pelican. They are contained in three letters, which show the writer to have been very much out of humour with this reformer. He gives an account of a conversation they had had together, and accuses Pelican of

8. Orthodoxy of Luther compared with the Scepticism of Erasmus.

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The curiosity of a merely speculative student of history may be much gratified in examining so extraordinary a character as that of Erasmus; but a sincere and zealous Christian will turn with pleasure from this ambiguous and versatile genius, to contemplate the contrast, which his honest adversary affords to the mind weary and disgusted with multiplied instances of insincerity and tergiversation. Luther's opinions never sit loose on his mind; they are always near his heart; and, whatever may be his faults of excessive vehemence or asperity, he is perfectly free from fickleness and indifference. The inexhaustible levity of Erasmus seems to have been peculiarly offensive to Luther. "I could wish," says he, in a letter to Amsdorf, that the writings of Erasmus were entirely exploded from our schools: for even if they were not hurtful, they could do no good. It is not expedient to accustom Christian youths to the diction of Erasmus. From him they will never learn to speak or think seriously and gravely on any subject whatever; but only, like a jackdaw, to peck and laugh at every body, and play the part of a fool. By this levity and this vanity their minds will become gradually so much disused to religion, that they will at length dislike it, and become absolutely profane *." Luther to Amsdorf.

In the same letter he observes, "that he thinks it more advisable not to answer Erasmus in future. For his own sake, however," he adds, "I will leave on record my decisive testimony, which will acquit him of a charge which he complains of as most miserably distressing to his mind; namely, that

* Op. Luth. Witt. II. 491.

grievously misrepresenting what had passed.—963—966. He appears also, by a letter to a Polish baron, to have suspected Pelican of having informed Luther of that conversation. 917.

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he is reckoned a Lutheran. Now, I am a most sure and faithful witness that he is still the same Erasmus only, and no Lutheran.—Christ lives; and it is my business to defend him against his enemies: and those do HIM great injury who accuse Erasmus of being a Lutheran."

No circumstance in this contest with Luther proved so vexatious and even galling to the mind of Erasmus, as the decisive and avowed judgment of Melancthon. Every tongue confessed the TALENTS, the LEARNING, the MODERATION of Melancthon. To complain therefore of the heat and asperity of Luther, appeared but a feeble confutation of the doctrines which Melancthon approved and defended. For, in the first place, all men of sober reflection could easily separate the substance of an article of faith from the warmth of the polemical language by which it might happen to be supported; and, secondly, even the multitude, whose sentiments are generally directed, in the main, by the opinion and authority of others, opposed in this instance the reputation of Melancthon to that of Erasmus, aided by an impression on their minds of the indisputable superiority of the former in religious knowledge, in the integrity of his life, and in the practice of piety.

Melancthon to Erasmus.

Melancthon addressed Erasmus in the following strain: "You seem out of humour with the cause of religion, on account of the faults of certain individuals. Luther is of a very different stamp from these. The proofs are decisive; for, to say nothing of his controversy with the Roman pontiff, his opposition at this moment to a novel faction of sanguinary teachers *, at great hazard of his life, shows how thoroughly he dislikes ambition, cruelty, and rebellion. For my part, I cannot, with a safe conscience, condemn Luther's sentiments, however I may be charged with folly or superstition: That does not weigh with me.—Yet I would oppose them

* The Prophets, together with the Rustics.

earnestly, if the Scriptures were on the other side. But most assuredly I shall never change my sentiments from a regard to human authority, nor the dread of disgrace. The discussion of the question of Free Will may prove useful to many. It will be your duty, my Erasmus, to be very cautious not to bring still greater odium upon the cause which the holy Scriptures so evidently favour. Moreover, as you have not yet condemned it, beware, lest, in attacking it with vehemence, you should wound your own conscience *."

These sentiments and declarations do great honour to Melancthon, especially as they are the substance of his reply to a long and very artful complimentary letter, written to him by Erasmus only a few weeks before. Erasmus had then just published his Diatribe, and was evidently trembling for the consequences.—" If Wittemberg," says he, "had not been so far off, I would have gone there for a few days, on purpose to communicate with you and Luther †. I have read all YOUR COMMON-PLACES or theological propositions; and I both love and admire, more than ever, your candid and happy genius; though I did stumble at some points, on which I should be glad to converse with you ‡." Then, after relating how ill he had been used by many of the reformers, and had had the nick-name of Balaam given to him; also what good advice he had given to the pope Adrian, and refused both money and a deanery offered to him by that pontiff, he whispers into the ear of Melancthon these words: " Cardinal Campeggio, a man certainly of singular humanity, sent one of his agents to treat with me

* Ep. 821.

† Jortin observes, that his whole conduct shows he had no thoughts of paying such a visit; and that these were mere compliments, to pacify Melancthon and Luther. 340.

‡ This is the very book to which Luther refers, page 272, when he speaks of Melancthon's invincible theological tracts.

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on many subjects, and, among other things, on the expedience of removing you to some other place. My answer was, that I most sincerely wished such a genius as yours to be perfectly free from all these contentions, but that I despaired of your recantation.—I open this secret to you, in the entire confidence, that you will be candid enough not to divulge it among the wicked ones *." Melancthon condescended to take no further notice of this bait, than barely that Erasmus might depend on his good faith, in whatever he should intrust to his secrecy.

Reply of Erasmus.

The reply of Erasmus is penned in an angry spirit, though considerably bridled, as far as Melancthon himself is personally concerned. He tells him, he had taken no great pains to induce him to forsake the Reformers, because he had foreseen he should lose his labour. He could have wished that a genius, born to improve literature, had been dedicated entirely to that service. There would still have been no want of actors in the present religious tragedy. He was far from being out of humour with Gospel-doctrine, but there was a great deal in Luther that offended him; and especially his disposition to carry every thing too far. "He had no doubt," he said, "of the sincerity of Melancthon; but he could not say the same of Luther."—He concludes, "If I had an opportunity of conversing with you, I would open my heart to you much more freely †."

The indisputable inference from all this is, that Erasmus, had it been in his power, would most gladly have withdrawn from the reformers that credit which they derived from the reputation of Melancthon, as a coadjutor possessed of learning, moderation and integrity. He would have liked those excellent men better, either if they had been stronger as a party, or if they had flattered him more. He saw many excellencies in them, but they were

* Ep. 820. † Id. 833.

neither courtly nor docile; and as a body of men systematically connected together, he supposed they might soon crumble to pieces. On the contrary, in the existing hierarchy, though Erasmus acknowledged there was much to blame, yet he judged it both wiser and safer to adhere to a system in which there was so great a preponderancy of wealth and power, and which therefore would probably in the end prevail.—Add to this, though the ecclesiastical dignity had lately experienced a violent shock, yet that very circumstance had much contributed to render the rulers of the church less haughty and presumptuous, and more affable and condescending, especially towards such a character as Erasmus, whom, we have seen, they were most anxious to engage, as a supporter of their cause in the Lutheran controversy. Still further: Erasmus not only believed the Roman catholics to be the stronger party, but judged it necessary, in his circumstances, to keep on good terms with their ecclesiastical rulers. Sensible that, by his satirical publications and free-thinking, he had brought on himself many enemies among the clergy, he lost no opportunity of securing the good-will and protection of the pope and his cardinals. Thus; when Clement VII. was first raised to the papal throne, he congratulated him in the most flattering, submissive, and artful strain *. He said, he could not express the satisfaction it had given him to hear of his advancement to the popedom. He was precisely the man, who was possessed of the qualities, mental and bodily, which the very turbulent times required. He therefore augured something of a new felicity.—In regard to himself, Erasmus said, "he could venture to swear, with Christ as witness to his sincerity, that if his holiness did but know how he had been solicited by great princes, and enticed by his friends, to join the Lutheran conspiracy against the Roman see; also,

* Ep. to Clement VII. p. 788.

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how he had been provoked to do the same by certain monks and divines, and how stedfastly he had resisted motives of every sort; he would not think him undeserving of his protection, but would punish the author who had so often libelled him at Rome in the most scandalous manner *. "This author," he said, "had picked out of his works a number of half sentences, and most impudently misrepresented them. Undoubtedly, if he could have foreseen the sectarians of the present day, he would have either suppressed many things which he had said, or written the same in a different manner. In the later editions he had left out many things, for the purpose of not giving a handle to ill-disposed persons; and would readily have altered other expressions, if any one had given him a friendly hint. On all occasions he submitted himself and his writings to the Roman See; and never should oppose its determination, even if he thought it wrong. For he would suffer any thing rather than be guilty of sedition."

One cannot but deeply lament how little solicitous, throughout the whole course of these ecclesiastical dissensions, this very eminent scholar appears to have been, respecting what was true or not true. Indeed, he scrupled not to declare to his friend Botzem, that though truth was a thing efficacious and invincible, it ought to be dispensed with Evangelical prudence. "For myself," says he, "I so abhor divisions, and so love concord, that I fear, if an occasion presented itself, I should sooner give up a part of truth than disturb the public peace †."

Erasmus had dedicated to this same friend Botzem an elaborate catalogue of all his works; which he positively affirms, in a letter to cardinal Sadolet, he would by no means have done, if he had had the slightest suspicion that he had taken part with that

* Stunica, a Spanish divine, who went to Rome, and there published a book, intitled, The Blasphemies and Impieties of Erasmus. See Du Pin, p. 333.

† Ep. 739.

faction which the Church had condemned*. But the accusation, he says, was unfounded. CENT. XVI.

What prodigious anxiety is here shown to be acquitted of the least imputation of any heretical connexion!

In another letter, he says, "What connexion have I with Luther, or what prospect of recompense from him, that I should join him in opposing Evangelical doctrine; or that I should take part against the Church of Rome, which I believe is not different from the true Church Catholic; or that I should oppose the Roman pontiff, who is the head of the Catholic Church—I, who should be sorry to resist the bishop of my own diocese? I am not so impious as to separate from the Catholic Church, nor so ungrateful as to dissent from Pope Leo, from whom I have experienced extraordinary favour and indulgence. Knowingly, I never have, nor ever will teach any erroneous doctrine; neither will I take the lead, or join in any tumult. Let others affect martyrdom; for my part, I do not hold myself worthy of that honour.—Do not suffer any calumnious reports, which you may hear, to render me suspected by you: Remain most perfectly assured, that nothing can be more certain, than that Erasmus always has been, and always will be, a supporter of the Roman See, to which I am under the greatest obligations on many accounts, and to whose adversaries I am particularly studious to show my aversion †." Erasmus to Cardinal Campeggio.

Thus, when Erasmus writes to a Cardinal, the Papists are the Catholic Church; but when he writes to a Reformer, as Melancthon, he calls them the Popish sect, and observes, that he should dislike cruelty, even if he were the most bigoted Papist ‡.

This species of tergiversation throws an indelible

* Ep. 854. † To Card. Campeggio, 601.
‡ To Melancth. 820. "Si Papisticæ sectæ essem addictissimus."

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stain on the memory of this great man; who, with a firmer temper, and purer religious motives, or in seasons of less temptation, might certainly have been much happier in his own mind, and abundantly more useful to the community.

He talked in the manner above described, endeavouring to steer between the dissentients, till nobody believed him; and till he himself would have been puzzled, I conceive, to have written a clear account of his own faith.—Yet, in one respect, he was most eminently qualified for the part which he had chosen to act: No man that ever lived, perhaps, possessed a superior neatness of expression, or a more masterly flexibility of language, when reducing to practice all the various arts of ambiguity and evasion.

It has been confidently asserted that Luther, notwithstanding the high estimation in which he held his treatise on the Bondage of the Will*, departed afterwards from the sentiments maintained in that treatise, and embraced others less rigid, and less offensive to common sense and the ordinary feelings of mankind.—A diligent and careful examination of this matter has convinced me, that there is no foundation for this opinion; certainly none in that passage of his Commentary on Genesis, chap. xxvi., which has been produced in proof.—It may, however, be not improbable, that experience had taught Luther, in the latter part of his life, the expediency of being more careful to guard the pure doctrines of the Gospel against the abuses to which they are exposed from "curious and carnal persons lacking the Spirit of Christ." So in his Commentary on Genesis, treating of the doctrine of Predestination, he makes the usual distinction between the secret and the revealed will of God, and observes, that that will of God is to be followed which we have expressly declared to us by the

* See page 271, and also the note (§) and Scultet. 34.

ministry of the word of God*. "I am the more desirous," says he, "to state this accurately, because I know that after my death many will make a bad use of what I have written, and thereby establish their erroneous and wild fancies of every kind. To be brief, they will take no notice of my repeated cautions, and will lay hold only of what I may have dropped concerning the secret will of God. Remember, then, what I now say; that with that secret will ye have nothing to do. . . . . If you shall hear the call of Jesus Christ, and be baptized in his name, and shall LOVE his word, you may assuredly reckon yourself among the predestinated, and have no doubt of your salvation †." How completely do these ideas accord with the spirit of our seventeenth article! CENT. XVI.

It is abundantly evident that Luther is here pleading against the abuse of the doctrine of the Divine prescience and predestination. For even persons of rank and distinction, he said, would talk in this wicked manner; namely, "If I am predestinated to be saved, then I shall be saved, whether I do good or evil. But if not, I shall be condemned without any regard to my works." Now if this be true, he contended, there would be no use in all that Christ had done for the salvation of mankind; no use in his incarnation, his passion, his resurrection; no use in the Prophets, the Sacraments, or in all the sacred volumes. The argument was mischievous, nay diabolical in its nature, and would lead men either into despair, or the contempt of God and his revelation. They would soon say with the Epicureans, Let us enjoy life, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. But to all such imaginations the antidote was, a true knowledge of God and his Christ. God is faithful, who hath promised. If God were not faithful to his promises,

* See Art. 17 of Church of England.

† Luth. Op. VI. 354.

there would be an end of all our hopes of salvation. "Thus," says he, "in my treatise on the Bondage of the Will, and in other places, I have observed that questions may be put concerning the secret or the revealed will of God. Now we know nothing of God any farther than he has been pleased to reveal himself. Moreover, what is above our comprehension is nothing to us. Deep speculations and pryings into matters not revealed can do no good: they serve the devil's purpose, and may prove our utter ruin *."

9. Melancthon's judgment of the controversy between Luther and Erasmus.

In regard to Melancthon's judgment of this controversy, we have seen that Luther appealed to his Theological tracts, as containing an invincible answer to the Diatribe of Erasmus †: nor can there be the smallest doubt, but that the former edition of those tracts maintained the complete inability of man, in full as strong terms as Luther himself on any occasion had supported that doctrine. "The divine predestination," said Melancthon, "takes away the liberty of man. For both the external actions, and the internal thoughts, of all created beings whatever, take place agreeably to the Divine predestination. The judgment of a carnal man resists this sentiment; but a man of spiritual understanding approves it. Moreover, the mind which is deeply affected with a sense of the Divine predeterminations will always have the profoundest reverence for God, as well as the most steady dependence on him ‡."

Some alterations in the expressions which took place in the later editions of these tracts have given rise to an opinion that Melancthon, partly

* Luth. Op. VI. 353. Also Scultet. 34.
† See page 271. ‡ Scultet. 38.

moved by the arguments of Erasmus, and partly disgusted with Luther's rigid doctrines of the Will, changed his sentiments on the important subject of the Freedom of the human Will *. To assist our judgments in this matter, several observations may be made. And first, Melancthon, in a letter to Erasmus himself, written more than three years after the publication of the Diatribe, and more than two years after the publication of Luther's answer, and, lastly, after he had read both the first and the second part of the Hyperaspistes, very clearly intimates that he still continued in the same sentiments with Luther. For he says, "Though I AM IN THE HABIT OF SPEAKING OUT WHAT I THINK OF THE CONTROVERSY which you have had with Luther, yet I never loved him to such a degree as to wish to increase his vehemence in a dispute. I wish this bitter contest between you had not happened.—Perhaps he has not treated you with sufficient respect; but then, on the other hand, you have reviled him to an astonishing degree †."

Secondly; More than twenty years after the date of the last-mentioned letter, Melancthon writes thus in his defence against Flacius, who had accused him of having altered the Protestant doctrines. "I am still of the same opinion that I was when I wrote my Theological tracts; a book now in the hands of many persons; and which is, in fact, a summary of those doctrines of Luther which had been delivered by him in various commentaries and in volumes of sermons. I submitted every part of my manuscript to the judgment of our Church, and of Luther himself; and on many points I consulted him very particularly ‡."

* Scultet. 37. Also Brandt. † Ep. 1072.

‡ Defens. contra Flac. lib. I. Ep. Melan. 133. As the first edition of Melancthon's Common-places, or Theological tracts, is exceedingly scarce, I have given in the Appendix a fuller account of its contents, so far as they relate to the difficult subject of the Divine decrees. See Appendix, Melancthon's Common-places.

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Thirdly; An attentive reader of the later editions of Melancthon's Theological tracts will observe, that the author has inserted cautions against the dangerous Stoical notion of fate and necessity; and also certain distinctions respecting that degree of freedom of will which remains even in fallen and unrenewed men, who nevertheless, by mere nature, do certain external works of the law, and also exercise a discretion in regulating their ordinary concerns. Luther makes a concession nearly to the very same purpose in his Bondage of the Will *. But both these eminent reformers are uniformly steady in asserting the great practical doctrine of original sin, and the natural enmity of the human heart to the holy law of God. "In that point," says Melancthon expressly in his chapter on Free-Will, "the human will is CAPTIVE, AND NOT FREE: NEITHER CAN IT DELIVER ITSELF FROM THIS EVIL PROPENSITY, OR FROM DEATH ITS CONSEQUENCE. THIS SAD CONDITION THEREFORE SHOULD BE FELT AND OWNED, IN ORDER THAT WE MAY HAVE A CLEAR VIEW OF THE BENEFITS OF CHRIST, WHO TAKES AWAY SIN AND DEATH †."

Fourthly; Though it must be owned there are some passages in Melancthon's Theological tracts, both in the chapter on Free Will, and on the Cause of Sin, which appear so obscure and contradictory, that they may well give rise to a degree of doubt and hesitation respecting the real sentiments of the writer; yet there exists a letter of this good man to Calvin himself, which in my judgment has cleared up this point as effectually as a matter of this kind admits of illustration from history. "My hypothesis," says Melancthon to Calvin, "is this; that God is neither the cause of sin, nor approves of sin. In the next place, I admit a contingency in our present weak condition of the judgment, that the unlearned may know that David rushed into sin by his

* 435, b. † Melancth. De Lib. Arbitrio, 166. b.

own voluntary act: and I think that the same David, when he had the Spirit of God, might have retained it; and, moreover, that in that struggle there was some action of the Will. Now though these points MAY be stated with greater subtilty, yet this mode of expressing them appears to me suited to practical purposes. Whenever we sin, we should blame our own wills; and not set up ourselves against God by seeking for the cause of our sin in his counsels." . . . . He then proceeds to say, "We should make the word of God our foundation; and not oppose the promises, but believe them; and not say, We will believe, as soon as we know what are the secret decrees of God. God helps the believer; and it is through his own word that he helps effectually."—Melancthon concludes with these remarkable words: "I do not write these things to you in a dictatorial spirit; it is not for me to dictate to so very learned a person, and so very well skilled in the exercises of piety; and indeed I am satisfied that these VIEWS OF MINE AGREE WITH YOURS, but they are stated in a ruder or less refined manner, and are adapted to use *."

The pious reader will not be at a loss to draw for himself the legitimate conclusion from these facts. He will see, that in the grand Christian article of original sin, and the total inability of man, and the necessity of the renovating grace of Christ, Melancthon was as sound and as steady as Luther himself; though, perhaps, he did not on all occasions grasp his objects with the force and the distinctness of his master.—If he had altered his sentiments materially on the Bondage of the Will, or, what is the very same thing, on the propensity of human nature to evil, it is impossible he could have written in this manner to a man who entertained the sentiments

* Calv. IX. Ep. and Respons. 174.

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of Calvin: and we are to remember, that the letter was written so late as the year 1543.

Still, there is nothing in all this inconsistent with a conscientious dislike of the fatalism of the Stoics; or a disapprobation either of certain peculiar expressions written many years ago by Melancthon himself, or of the Stoical tendency of some of the writings of the divines of Geneva. We may add, that the animadversions of Melancthon on the Calvinistic divines, in some instances, do manifestly respect their bigotry and intolerance, rather than any want of orthodoxy in their principles. Thus when he complains to his friend Camerarius of the violence of the contests respecting the Stoical doctrines of necessity, and tells him that a person had been actually imprisoned because he dissented in opinion FROM ZENO*, we are at no loss to comprehend why he should have been understood by some persons to have had his eye on the followers of Calvin, and perhaps on Calvin himself, and to have represented them as introducing the heathen notions of fate and predestination †: nor need we wonder that he should have thought proper to soften, or totally expunge, in his later Theological tracts, all expressions on the subject of predestination, like those mentioned in page 330, which certainly are more exceptionable, because less guarded, and more liable to abuse than any thing advanced by Luther on this difficult article of religion.

When the diligent and impartial student has well considered all these things, he will see what little reason there is to represent Melancthon as having greatly disliked Luther's treatise on the Bondage of the Will, and judged it a dangerous and hurtful book, in which every thing is carried too far, and in which invincible arms are furnished to libertines and unbelievers for the rejection of Revelation. As little reason will he find for the insinuation, that Melanc-

* IV. Ep. 796. p. 923. † Melch. Ad. V. Calv. 43. fol. 86. 8vo.

thon, in consequence of this publication of Luther, began to separate himself from the system of that great reformer*. How careful ought historians to be, in leaving on record concise, equivocal, and incautious remarks, which perhaps at first were intended to mean but little; but which, afterwards having been exaggerated without warrant, and often copied by writers succeeding one another, at length acquire a degree of currency, capable of deceiving posterity,—and this almost without leaving a possibility of detecting the imposture.

The learned biographer of Erasmus allows that Luther's sentiments were at bottom the same with those of Augustine; but that Erasmus was unacquainted with that circumstance†, and imagined that he was only disputing against Luther, while in reality he was as much opposing Thomas Aquinas and his followers as the Reformer of Wittemberg. The same author tells us, that Luther had learnt his notions of fatalism from Augustine, and also from him had learnt to think ill of the Pelagians; and moreover, that Luther misunderstood and misapplied some passages in St. Paul's epistles, which in those days were not so fully cleared up as they have been since‡.

The intelligent Reader probably knows enough of the sentiments of Jortin to be aware of the manner in which that author would be disposed to clear up certain doctrinal passages in the writings of St. Paul; and therefore no more need be said on this head.

* See Beausobre, III. 258, who, however, allows that there is no proof that Luther himself abandoned his system, whatever may have been said to the contrary. It is true enough, that in no very great length of time after Luther's decease, many of his followers, who still preserved the denomination of LUTHERAN, departed materially from the principles of their master; and I wish that in so doing it might be found they did not also lose the spirit of the Gospel.

† Jortin, 335 & 403. ‡ Id. 336.

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The evidence, however, of such a writer and such a scholar may well deserve our notice, when he speaks positively to the following important fact.

Luther's "favourite doctrine was justification by faith; and not by works, moral, legal, or evangelical: but we must do him the justice to observe, that he perpetually inculcated the absolute necessity of good works. According to him, a man is justified only by faith; but he cannot be justified without works; and where those works are not to be found, there is assuredly no true faith *."

10. Hostility of Erasmus: his apologies.

The publication of the treatise on the Bondage of the Will produced an irreparable breach between Erasmus and Luther. Even Beausobre admits, that the former became the irreconcilable enemy of the Lutherans, and lost no opportunity of speaking ill of them †. Erasmus, in one of his letters, says, "Luther has written in such a way as to have left no room for friendship, and yet he thinks he has most wonderfully bridled his passion ‡."

Luther, however, with a more Christian spirit, and with the hope of preventing the mischief which, through the exasperated pen of Erasmus, might happen either to the Reformation in general, or to individuals who were disposed to befriend it, ventured once more to write a conciliatory letter to the man whom he had irritated so much by his answer to the Diatribe. In this letter he confessed the infirmity of a violent temper, which was apt to carry him too far; but, in return, he received nothing from Erasmus but reproaches and reviling language. "You have written against no person," says he, "more savagely or more maliciously: and

* Jortin, 120. † III. 260.
‡ To Bilibald, 940.

I am not so much of a child as to be easily wheedled and cajoled into good humour." Erasmus concludes his letter thus: "I could wish you a better disposition, unless you are mightily pleased with your own. To me you may wish whatever you will, only do not wish me to have your disposition, unless indeed God should change it for you." CENT. XVI.

It is painful to see to what lengths of calumny the resentment of Erasmus could carry him, all the while professing himself to be actuated by pure Christian motives. Had he confined the operation of his ill humour to Luther only, whose treatment of him was certainly sufficiently provoking to a proud man accustomed to hear little except his own praises, he would have been much more excusable. But what shall we think of such declarations, as, "I hate these Gospellers; as for many other reasons, so particularly for this, that through them literature declines every where, and is on the point of perishing; and without letters, what is life? They love money and a wife, and care not a rush for any thing else. We have been stunned long enough with the cry of Gospel, Gospel, Gospel: we want Gospel morals*." The angry writer here alludes to those priests and monks who embraced the Reformation, and, along with that, a state of matrimony.

Erasmus had sense enough to see that the Church stood in need of reformation: moreover, his satirical wit was of infinite use in exposing the immoralities of the clergy, and in lowering their credit. But he had neither the courage to stand forward himself as a reformer, nor the honesty to join those who ventured their lives in the good cause. As long as the success of these heroes seemed entirely doubtful, he appears to have treated

* Ep. 1069.

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them with considerable candour and respect *, and, to do him justice, always exclaimed against attempts to extirpate them by cruelty and persecution. But, when they were become strong and numerous, and could do without his help, his pride was so deeply wounded, that he constantly showed himself their determined adversary. Yet, in his opposition to them, he found himself miserably fettered by his former and even his present connexions, and also by many things which, both in his letters and his publications, he had advanced in harmony with the sentiments of the reformers. Hence that timidity, double-dealing, chagrin and resentment, which one laments in the conduct of this great man during the latter part of his life.

Erasmus to Conrad Pelican.

We are never, I think, so much disposed to be out of humour with Erasmus, as when he appears to triumph in the unhappy dissensions of the first reformers.—"Fight," says he, in a letter to Conrad Pelican, "among yourselves: Zuingle and Ecolampadius against Luther and Pomeranus; and again, Balthasar against the former; and Farel against you. Shall I, at the hazard of my life, nay of my salvation, connect myself with such a discordant faction? Whatever mischief happen to you, impute it to yourselves: I always foretold that no good could come of such proceedings †." In another place he says, "When Luther first appeared in this new character, I augured but too truly that matters would come to this pass; but I was not believed. Now, as is the case with fools, he has learnt by experience to be so moderate in his measures that he almost publishes a recantation ‡." And again: "This Gospel-fever, for so I choose to

* "I fear," says Erasmus, "exceedingly for poor Luther; so much does the conspiracy work on all sides. The great men also, especially pope Leo, are irritated against him." To Gerard Noviom. 577, in the year 1520.

† To Conrad Pelican, 964. ‡ Id. 1137.

call it, begins to remit, and to afford a prospect of returning health. What comes from Luther now, is of such a kind, that he seems to recant his former doctrines; and thus his very disciples are out of humour with him, and are inclined to call him a heretic, and a man destitute of the spirit of the Gospel, and grown crazy by giving way to human reasonings*!!" CENT. XVI.

What a bad spirit manifests itself in all this miserable misrepresentation!!

It was not unusual for the Protestants to select from the writings of Erasmus, and circulate among the people, such passages as favoured themselves and their cause. This procedure, while it weakened the authority of their adversary, was apt to inflame his resentment to the highest pitch. Gerard Noviomagus, who had formerly been an intimate of Erasmus, affords an instance of this sort. This reformer, disgusted with the unmanly conduct of his friend in the business of religion, exposed, in several small publications, his inconsistency and want of principle; and, in particular, charged him with having formerly maintained the unlawfulness of putting heretics to death.

The APOLOGY of Erasmus upon this occasion is one of the most exceptionable pieces among all his voluminous writings. He calls it a letter against certain professors of the Gospel falsely so named.—Under pretence of criticising the bad practices of some, "he defamed during this year," says a very candid Annalist, "all the friends of the Reformation to a man; and this to please the Emperor, who was coming from Italy into Germany†." He himself, to avoid suspicion, had left Basil, where a reformation of the Church had taken place, and was gone to Friburg‡. It is not worth while to trouble the Reader with many extracts from this most peevish and acrimonious treatise. He now began to maintain, that there were certain heresies, which Apology of Erasmus.

* To Sadolet, 1125. † Sculter. XXIX. 250.
‡ Sleidan, VI. 169.

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had the nature of blasphemy and sedition; and he asked, Whether, in such cases, the sword was to be withheld from princes? It was a fault, he owned, to drag men to the fire for EVERY ERROR; but it was also wrong to contend, that NO HERETIC whatever ought to be put to death by the civil magistrate *. "Then as to the corrupt state of the Church," he said, "there was in ecclesiastical institutions, as in other human affairs, a beginning, a progress, and a completion: and to pretend to reduce the Church to its first and original principles, was as absurd as to put an adult back again into his cradle †." To be brief, he was of opinion that if St. Paul were then alive, he would not disapprove of the present state of the Church, but would declaim against the vices of men ‡.

He makes an invidious comparison between the primitive Christians and these novel evangelists, calumniating the latter in every way he could devise. "The former recommended their doctrine by mildness and simplicity of manners, and by patience in bearing injuries; whereas the societies of the latter abounded with adulterers, drunkards, gamesters, and spendthrifts." He said, "It had been his misfortune not to know a single person who had not been made a worse character by joining the Gospellers: Luther's cause was not of the very worst kind at first, but he had raised such disturbances, that Melancthon was at this very time following him wherever he had been, as LITE follows ATE, endeavouring to restore peace and harmony §."

One might here be allowed to ask,—How COULD Erasmus here forget the numerous encomiums on the virtues and piety of the reformers, which are to be found dispersed through his writings?—Also, how is it that he was not aware, that if he himself had been

* Op. Eras. X. 1576. † Id. X. 1585. ‡ Id. X. 1587.
§ Id. 1578 to 1582. ATE is the goddess of mischief; LITE the goddess of entreaty.

seized as a heretic, he would infallibly have been condemned at a tribunal of Monks, and probably would have met with the same fate from the Pope and his Cardinals if he had been caught at Rome; unless indeed the unparalleled dexterity of his address, and the flexibility of his language, might have saved him?—The answer is, Erasmus was then in a passion. CENT. XVI.

The protestant Clergy of Strasburg thought proper to reply to the indiscriminate slander of Erasmus. But as this tract is not before us, all we can say of it is, that the reformers had very just cause for complaint. Erasmus considered his old friend Noviomagus as the real author of the work; and, in an ill-humoured epistle to Melancthon, speaks thus of him: "Formerly, one Noviomagus had a most extraordinary affection for me; but being a little intoxicated, he travelled to Strasburg, and is now there raging as violently against me as if I had murdered his father, his mother, his grandfather, and grandmother. He has subscribed his own name to four pamphlets;—and the fifth comes out under the name of the ministers of Strasburg, and is as seditious a publication as can exist*." Upon reading the last-mentioned treatise, Erasmus became so outrageous, that he published an answer to it, addressed to the BRETHREN of the Lower Germany, which is infinitely more violent and slanderous than his preceding Apology against the pretended Gospellers. The following is a specimen of the spirit which pervades this performance. "I knew a certain person whom for more than ten years I loved as if he had been my own son; and, in return, the youth was as dutiful to me as to a father. There was in him every appearance of a good disposition. But as soon as he had had a draught of this evangelical spirit, he began, contrary to all expectation, to be a good player at dice, a sitter up all night at cards, and a man of an elegant taste for lewd women. By and by, he

* Ep. to Melancthon, 1301.

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began to wear a long sword in a slovenly dissolute manner, and to think of matrimony.—Lastly, he took offence at half a word, and, from being my friend, suddenly changed into a viper against me, and became as greedy of revenge as if I had murdered his mother.

"I could mention another, who is strongly attached to the same party: a man, against whom I never said a word, but have often commended him both in my conversation and my writings; a man to whom I have done some good turns; who, though he never expostulated with me, yet since his departure, has discovered the most bitter enmity towards me; and not content with wounding my character in conversation, has written a pamphlet against me, which he reads to his pot-companions. And all this because I refused to act the part of a madman like himself. Further, I was no restraint to the man; I even pleaded his excuse with the bishop: I warned him, in a letter, of the danger he had to apprehend from a magistrate. He profited by the advice; and, upon receiving a summons, chose rather to quit the place. Now, this man is one of the heads of the Gospel party!"

Thus the author goes on with one story after another*.

"In matters of business," he says, "he had found the Gospellers more unfeeling, and less to be trusted, than other people;" and adds, "that he was acquainted with some of the Roman-catholic bishops, whose sanctity he preferred to that of a thousand of the new sectaries." He then tells us, "that he never went into their churches, but had often seen with his own eyes individuals coming from the service, and had often inquired of them very particularly what had been doing there, and whether, for example, when Ecolampadius preached, they had ever seen a single person sighing or shedding a tear on account of his sins: that the answer was, Not one;

* Op. Eras. X. 1607 to 1609.

—but that they had seen many yawning and half-asleep *."

Erasmus proceeds to ask, Why the Evangelic sectaries should shrink so much at the charge of sedition, when Luther himself had maintained in his writings, that it was the peculiar nature of the Gospel to excite seditions †?—Yet this is the same man, a large portion of whose voluminous writings consists of complaints against heat and violence, misrepresentation, and want of candour!!!

We must not deprive the reader of a few sentences towards the conclusion of this memorable Apology of Erasmus. He addresses the brethren thus: "I shall say nothing of the author of the book, because I am not perfectly sure who he is. But certainly it is a most empty, slanderous, and seditious publication, and as foolish as it is deficient in learning ‡. You, my dear friends, I conjure not to suffer the appearance of false religion to impose on your simplicity, neither to let any one bewitch you to quit the communion of the Church.—In regard to a complete reform of the ecclesiastical state, the Princes will take care of that; and the thing may be done by them without tumult. In the mean time, do ye preserve the unity of the Church, and turn neither to the right hand nor to the left. Beware diligently of those, whose speech is mild but contagious, creeping like a cancer. Objections are made to the bad lives of the priests: the tyranny of the papal decrees is exaggerated: the evil practices of the monks are exposed, and promises of liberty are held forth: This is the bait; but do ye take care, lest there should be found lurking under it a steel hook, which may entangle you, and prove your destruction. What greater folly than to show your hatred to priests and wicked monks, in such a manner as to render them no better, and to make yourselves worse than they are! For there is no

* Op. Eras. X. 1611. † Id. X. 1617. ‡ Id. 1627.

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fault worse than heresy or schism. Be it granted, that luxury, lewdness, ambition, avarice, and every other crime, may all be found in one single priest; heresy is, however, worse than this whole aggregate of vices. In all ages, there have been many complaints as well against priests and princes, as against the morals of the people. In different periods, different vices have predominated; but vices there always have been. In our anger against ecclesiastics, let us not forget that they are but men. Practices, which are not to be borne, will be corrected by the authority of the princes much more efficaciously than by inexperienced UPSTARTS, who exasperate the evils by the bad methods in which they undertake to remove them. Let Christ make the reform through the medium of Charles V., an emperor eminent for his power, eminent for his clemency, and equally eminent for his religion. The co-operation of the German princes may be depended upon; and there are many circumstances which induce us to entertain a good hope that the thoughts of the Pope are turned the same way.—No reformation of the Church will succeed but what originates with our rulers. The Pope alone, with the Emperor, can do the business; and unless appearances deceive us, Christ hath actually influenced their minds to this good work*."

It is impossible for any one, who is conversant with the writings of Erasmus, to read these passages without feeling a disagreeable mixture of indignation and contempt.

11. INCONSISTENCY AND LEVITY OF ERASMUS.

NOT a month before he had vented his spleen in this manner against the German protestants; and, at the same time, with so much candour, had formed these sanguine expectations, from the laudable

† Op. Eras. 1629.

exertions of the Pope and the Emperor, I find the very flexible Erasmus could write as follows to a learned and eminent Reformer, whose good opinion he did not wish to lose. "God alone, my dearest Philip, can unravel the confused plot of the tragedy which is now acting every where. Ten councils may assemble together, and yet not do it; much less I. If a MAN PROPOSES ANY THING EQUITABLE, he is instantly ACCUSED of LUTHERANISM, and he has no other recompense*."

The mild and affectionate temper of Melancthon could not fail to feel the influence of kind and artful expressions; and there was reason to fear, lest sometimes a bad use should be made of the answers which might be drawn from him by the insinuating address and management of Erasmus in his letters. The excellent Camerarius saw the danger; and as the breach between the Reformers and Erasmus was every day growing wider, he ventured to caution his friend Melancthon not to write any more to a man whose unfriendly disposition was no longer doubtful.

Melancthon, though naturally timid and pacific, was yet always conscientious, and often proved himself capable of vigour and activity, as soon as the line of his duty appeared distinct, and called for courage and decision. Accordingly, he not only profited by the friendly suggestions of Camerarius, but opened his mind on that occasion respecting Erasmus with less reserve than I remember him to have done in any other part of his writings. "I will follow your advice," says Melancthon ingenuously, in his reply to Camerarius: "moreover, you know very well that I never much courted his friendship. What little penetration have our adversaries! They are fond of the man, who has dispersed throughout his writings the seeds of many opinions, which, if Luther had not arisen, would perhaps at

* To Philip Melancth. 1296.

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length have produced far more grievous disturbances, and have drawn men's attention another way. All this bitter contention concerning the Lord's Supper appears to owe its origin to him. Then, in some places, how far does he seem from disliking Arius and his party, to which we here are most firm in our opposition! Lastly, is there, in all his writings, a syllable on the subject of justification, or on the rights of governors, which is truly worthy of a Christian man? I would gladly see these topics fully handled by great writers; but let those extol HIM WHO DO NOT KNOW HIM*."

Such had been the tergiversation and versatility of Erasmus, such the most solemn protestations of the sincerity of his faith, and so many the ambiguous and satirical effusions of his wit on occasions which could not but give offence to serious and pious minds, that it is not easy to point out the person who really loved and respected this otherwise great and venerable character. At the end of the year 1527, we find the Emperor himself writing to Erasmus, and telling him how great was his satisfaction to have been informed, by Erasmus's own letters, that the madness of the Lutherans began to decline. "The whole Christian world," he said, "was indebted to him for having effected that which neither emperors, nor popes, nor princes, nor universities, nor numbers of learned men had been able to bring about." Notwithstanding all this gross flattery, the Emperor, in the same letter tells him, that he had allowed the Spanish Inquisition to examine his books—but that he had nothing to fear. The Emperor was fully convinced of his orthodoxy. However, if it should appear that he had made any slip, or had advanced any thing ambiguous, he would certainly, upon

The Emperor writes to Erasmus, A. D. 1527.

* Melancthon to Camerarius, IV. 676; where, for the sake of caution, he calls Erasmus Pothinus; which, in Greek, answers to Desiderius, one of the names of Erasmus. See also Scultet. XXIX. 250.

receiving a friendly admonition, clear it up, and, by thus removing every thing that could give offence to weak minds, secure immortality to his writings*. CENT. XVI.

We need not observe, that, in this letter, there was quite as much bitter as sweet for Erasmus.

It added not a little to his mortification, that, about the same time, the Faculty of Divines of the University of Paris extracted upwards of thirty propositions from his writings, and censured them in very strong terms †. His letters and his defence, on this occasion, are inimitable specimens of the author's great powers of evasion and address. There is in them an artful mixture of submission, sarcasm, and menace. Yet, after all, the situation of Erasmus was such as exposed him rather to ridicule than envy.—Perpetually calling heaven and earth to witness how good a Catholic he was, till nobody believed him; despising in his heart, and even hating the Parisian theologians, he yet condescended to make an ungracious sort of submission to them, and to own his having said things in his writings without sufficient caution; and, lastly, magnifying his own merits for having always been stanch to the Church, and vilifying the Reformers for their heresy, he could not however deny, but that, in arguing against impieties, he himself might have, in some instances, fallen into errors of an impious nature ‡.

Erasmus, in the preface to his DECLARATIONS, expresses, in sarcastic language, sufficiently intelligible, his very great anxiety for the dignity and reputation for the divines of the Sorbonne. In his reply to their conclusion, he complains of the injury they had done to him, by representing him and Luther of the same class, when, in fact, not any one of his

* Erasmo, 1047.

† Du Pin, III. 240 & 335. Also Op. Eras. IX. 819.

‡ Ep. Coll. Sorb. Theol. Hisp. Sorbon. Senat. Par. Beddæ, 1031 to 1044.

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propositions entirely agreed with those of Luther*; and, in his letter to Bedda, who was the principal instigator of the processes against him at Paris, he strongly intimates, that he might be so provoked by ill usage as to revolt to the enemies of the Church. Let the Reader determine his meaning; his words are these: "If I should be overcome with injuries, and revolt to the enemies of the Church, of whom will God require my poor soul, but of you? That I have hitherto persevered, it is not by my own strength, but through the Divine assistance; and, by the same assistance, I hope to persevere to the end. But who may not be worn out by such atrocious and such perpetual abuse? If that should happen, do not you see what a disturbance it may be in my power to raise? and do you never consider what an extensive mischief may be the consequence of your present measures? Erasmus is not so devoid of friends as you suppose†."

Almost two years before this remonstrance, he had addressed the same Parisian divine in a very long exculpatory epistle, composed in a most truly Erasmian style. "What can I do with all the suspicions of mankind? There are so many myriads of condemned articles; so many battalions of scholastic dogmas; so many connexions, partialities, and hatreds; so many sects, and so many mad brains, that it is impossible to please all. Hitherto I have endeavoured to act an upright part; and you would say so, were you here. If I were so fond of glory as some suppose; nay, if I did not thoroughly, from the bottom of my heart, abhor factions and heresies, I might have been either allured by numerous flatteries, or entangled by the various snares that have been laid for me; or again, I might have been driven either by the furious threats and pamphlets of the

* Eras. IX. 922.

† Beddæ, 1039. Erasmus wished to have prevented the publication of the censure of his works.

Lutherans, or by the no less furious publications, detractions, and slanders of the opposite faction, to take the field on the side of the Reformers, with whom, if I had connected myself, matters would have been by this time in such a state, that the censures of divines would have had no great weight. I know you will say, I make myself of vast consequence. I answer, I could speak of myself in a much higher style if I pleased, and very truly too. I do not repent of the part I have acted in thus keeping clear of the sectarians; and I hope, through God's help, to continue in the same mind; but if ye think that I deserve to be hunted thus by a set of wicked cavillers, you must take the consequences *."

There is no end of the contradictory declarations of Erasmus. The following is a remarkable instance.—Little more than half a year had elapsed since his address to the brethren of the Lower Germany, in which he attempts to mitigate the charges against the clergy, thinks very favourably of the religion of Charles V., and expresses good hopes of the Pope's concurrence in the work of reformation †, when he writes to Matthias Kretzer in substance to this effect: "That the emperor was in a state of most violent irritation; and that there were those who were throwing oil into the fire ‡. That some who wore purple gowns did much mischief by their conduct; for though they could not but know that the luxury and pride of the clergy had been the chief cause of the present dissensions, yet they lived in incredible pomp, revelling, and sometimes playing at dice all night; and not even taking care to keep their practices from the knowledge of the people. That the haughtiness, not to say the tyranny, of the ecclesiastics, was on the increase:

* Beddæ, 873. † See page 344.

‡ Meaning the Pope, who, with the Emperor's assistance, was endeavouring to crush the reformers. See Jortin, I. 506.

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Their wealth and their luxury were also on the increase, but there was not the least diminution of their thirst after these things." "It was not for him," Erasmus said, "to judge of the Pope, but those who came from Italy told things which he could not hear without sorrow. How harshly had he treated Florence! As far as he could judge, the Pope, by the help of the princes, and by augmenting the number of his cardinals, was aiming at the extinction of every attempt at reformation. And what was all this but to provoke God more and more *?"

Erasmus's account of the revolution at Basil. A. D. 1529.

The writings of Erasmus abound with humorous levities †, which, by persons of piety and religion, were not always deemed inoffensive. For example, in describing the revolution which took place at Basil in 1529, he says, "Not a particle of an image is left in the churches, so exceedingly hot is the war against idols in the midst of this cold weather. The images of the saints, and even of the crucifix, have been treated with so much ludicrous insult, that it may be thought extraordinary no miracle should have been wrought on the occasion, especially as the saints of former times were very touchy, and performed plenty of them in consequence of slight affronts. They tell horrid stories of saints, who, in many instances, punished persons for using profane expressions; insomuch, that I cannot but wonder that not one out of so many should revenge himself on the authors of this prodigious devastation. AS TO THE MILDNESS OF CHRIST AND THE BLESSED VIRGIN, THAT I AM NOT SURPRISED AT ‡."

The levity of Erasmus so early as A. D. 1521.

Even so early as the year 1521, we find Erasmus expressing himself on religious subjects in a manner inconsistent with that gravity of character which became his age and reputation for learning;

* Ep. 1361. † See Luther's observation, in page 321.
‡ Ep. 1171. 1188. 1223.

insomuch, that, for many years past, the articles of his creed had been judged both scanty and uncertain. CENT. XVI.

Confession of Erasmus.

Let the following confession to his friend Richard Pace be attentively considered.—"At length I perceive the intention of the Germans is to involve me, whether I will or not, in the business of Luther. In so doing, they have acted unwisely, and have rather alienated me from their cause. What good could I have done Luther by sharing the danger with him, except that, instead of one man, two might have perished? I cannot conceive why he writes with such a spirit: I am sure he brings an odium on the lovers of literature. There is no doubt but he has taught many excellent doctrines, and also given much excellent advice; and I wish he had not spoiled the good by intolerable faults. But if every syllable he had written were unexceptionable, it was not my disposition to run the hazard of my life for the sake of truth. It is not every man who has sufficient courage to be a martyr; and I am afraid, that, in case of trial or persecution, I should follow Peter's example. I follow the decisions of the Pope and the Emperor when they are right, which is acting like a religious man; and when they are wrong I submit, which is taking the safe side.—And I am of opinion that even good men may conduct themselves thus, when there is no hope of obtaining redress*."

Here, at once, from his own mouth, is the solution of all the enigmatical conduct of Erasmus.—Many sincere and excellent Christians have, I believe, been as timid and irresolute as he was, but their timidity and irresolution was their pain and their burthen. They prayed for grace to help in time of need; they never made light of their infirmities or besetting sins; but, on the contrary, viewed them as the enemies to their spiritual

* Ep. 651.

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improvement, and struggled to obtain victory over them, constantly fighting like faithful soldiers of Christ, and diligently avoiding the snares of temptation. It was the gradual unfolding of the motives which governed Erasmus, and their practical consequences, which alienated from him, in their turns, the minds of the most eminent reformers; for example, of Luther first, and of Melancthon, more slowly, afterwards.—Luther freely confesses, that his most affectionate friend Justus Jonas incessantly solicited him to treat Erasmus with respect, and to avoid all harshness and asperity in his controversies with him. "You cannot think," he used to say, "how excellent and venerable a character the old man is*." But he had the satisfaction to find that Jonas altered his mind upon reading the first part of the Hyperaspistes. "I congratulate you," said he, "my excellent friend, on your recantation in regard to Erasmus, in whose praise you used formerly to have so much to say. You now paint him in his true colours, namely, as a viper full of deadly stings. I rejoice that the perusal of one of his Hyperaspistes has so effectually opened your eyes†."

This long detail of the controversy between Erasmus and Luther, and of the circumstances connected with it, will not be deemed uninteresting by any student of the history of the Church of Christ, who wishes to become acquainted with the real motives of the principal actors in those scenes which, under Divine Providence, brought about the blessed Reformation.—Erasmus, Luther, and Melancthon, are unquestionably to be reckoned among those principal actors, though by no means so as to exclude several others from their right to a substantial share of the praise. The unhappy inconsistencies which we have remarked in the character of Erasmus,

* Seck. II. 81.—Luth. Respons. Hen. VIII. 495.

† Ep. by Aurifab. II. 353.

though extremely derogatory to his personal worth, in no wise weaken the proofs we have given of the great advantages which the cause of Christian liberty derived from certain parts of his labours. As these contributed much to unveil the tyranny, corruptions, and iniquitous lives of the clergy, they prepared men's minds for that shock which the Papacy was soon to receive; a shock however of which Erasmus neither foresaw the probability, nor wished to be the author.—His memorable interview at Cologne with the Elector Frederic, and his account of a number of propositions, which he considered as axioms in the affair of Luther, took place at a most important and critical juncture *. In regard to Luther, there can be no necessity to repeat often what nobody denies; namely, that his eye was always single and steady. The frequent insinuations of the operation of ambitious motives, may, perhaps, have produced unfavourable impressions on some minds; nevertheless, all such impressions are without warrant, and cannot fail to vanish on the mere inspection of the decisive documents, both public and private, which are contained in this History.

Of Melancthon we may truly say, that integrity, piety, and discretion, were parts of his character; for these virtues posterity do him ample justice: at the same time, nobody, I think, who knows him well, considers him as a model either of unusual firmness or extraordinary penetration. The characters both of Luther and of Erasmus appear to me to have been very much misunderstood; and that labour is well employed which contributes to rectify erroneous judgments of this sort. The asperity and positiveness of Luther have had the effect of lowering him too much: The politeness and civility of Erasmus have contributed to raise him too high; and it is with no little concern that I am

* See the Elector's interview with Erasmus, Ch. VI. Vol. VI.

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constrained to add, that the propensity of his religious sentiments—to make the very best of them—towards the Pelagian, or half Pelagian heresy, secures him but too favourable a reception with many modern divines. The Church of England reprobates Pelagianism expressly; and therefore such of its members as are disposed to applaud the comments and interpretations of Erasmus and his admirers, would do well to examine, whether, in so doing, they act consistently with their own confessions of Faith*.

CONCLUSION OF THE CONTROVERSY WITH ERASMUS.

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FROM THE CONCLUSION OF THE CONTROVERSY WITH ERASMUS, TO THE CONCLUSION OF THE SACRAMENTAL CONTROVERSY.

CONCESSIONS OF LUTHER MADE TO HENRY VIII. AND DUKE GEORGE OF SAXONY.
CONSEQUENCES OF THOSE CONCESSIONS.
CONTINUATION OF THE CHAPTER.

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LUTHER was not much in the habit of making concessions. It is however greatly to his praise, that notwithstanding the violence of his natural temper, there are yet not wanting in his conduct instances of extraordinary self-government, at particular junc-

* See Article IX. of the Church of England.

tures, when the cause of the Gospel appeared to him to require moderate and pacific measures. CENT. XVI.

We have seen, in the last chapter, his attempts to conciliate Erasmus, and secure at least the neutrality of a man, whose avowed hostility might impede the progress of the Reformation. His treatment of Henry VIII. and of George of Saxony, are examples of the same kind.

In the year 1521, he had published a very rough and churlish reply to Henry's celebrated answer to his treatise on the Babylonish Captivity *. Erasmus had highly commended the king's book, even before he had read it †; but Luther had criticised the several parts of it without ceremony; and, in his conclusion, had said, "If the liberty I take with the king should offend any person, let him have this answer: First, I have to do with unfeeling monsters, who have despised all my best and most modest writings, and also my exceedingly humble submissions; and have grown harder in consequence of my moderation. Secondly, I have abstained from falsehood and from bitterness; whereas the king's book is full of both. And, lastly, it is no such great matter that I should treat with contempt and severity an earthly king, who has blasphemed and profaned the King of heaven by his virulent misrepresentations ‡."

A little experience had convinced Luther, that he had done no good by exasperating a tyrant of the cruel and resentful character of Henry VIII. For no sooner had the angry monarch read the book, than he complained heavily to the Elector Frederic, to the Dukes John his brother and George his uncle, of the proceedings of Luther. "All Germany," he said, "was in the utmost danger from the spreading of his doctrines. Moreover, they ought by no means to allow Luther's false translations of the

* P. 26—28. † Ep. to Richard Pace, 600.
‡ Luth. contra Reg. Ang. II. 347.

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New Testament to be dispersed among their subjects."

Then the Duke George, as might be expected, joined heartily in the censure; and told Henry, that he had punished the bookseller who first imported and sold an impression of Luther's Testament among his subjects *.

The answer of Frederic also was timid and evasive. He pretended ignorance of such subjects; and wished every thing to be referred to a general council †.

Add, that it could not escape Luther, in reflecting on the mischievous consequences of his imprudent provocation of the king of England, that Henry's urgent solicitations of Erasmus to take the field against the arch-heretic ought not to be omitted ‡. What could gratify the enraged controversialist more, than to see the adversary, who had treated his royal dignity with so little respect, defeated and humbled by the supposed invincible pen of Erasmus?

But another reason, more than any that have yet been mentioned, operated powerfully on the mind of Luther, and inclined this undaunted reformer to make concessions to King Henry VIII. Christiern, king of Denmark, had taken prodigious pains, both in conversation and by letters, to persuade him, that if he would only condescend to address the English monarch in very modest language, he might be gained over to the cause of pure Evangelical truth. Luther owns that he was in a manner inebriated by these large promises, and began to waver. "Who knows," said he, "but, in a happy hour, I may gain the king of England? Certainly I should incur the Divine displeasure, were I to lose any favourable opportunity."

Under the influence of these motives, he wro

* Sleidan, IV. 91. † Com. de Luth. p. 278.

‡ See page 261 of this Vol.

to Henry in the most submissive style, confessing, that, at the instance of other persons, he had grievously offended his majesty by a foolish and precipitate publication. "He received, however, daily," he said, "such accounts of the king's clemency, that he could not but hope for forgiveness. He also had been told, that his majesty was not the real author of the book which had been edited against Luther under the king's name." He takes occasion to call Cardinal Wolsey the pest of the kingdom; and adds, that it rejoiced his heart to hear that his majesty began to favour the Gospel, and to be tired of those abandoned sycophants who had disgraced him. "If the king pleased," he added, "he was ready to own his fault publicly; and he trusted, that if he might be allowed to write to the king of England concerning the present state of religion, service would thereby be done to the Gospel of Christ and the glory of God."

Luther's Concessions to Hen. VIII.

He then entreated his majesty to consider what possible harm a man could do, who taught nothing but that we are to be saved by believing in Jesus Christ the Son of God, who suffered for us, and rose again from the dead. This was the fundamental doctrine upon which he erected all the rest; as, love to our neighbour, obedience to rulers, and mortification of the body of sin.—What harm, he asked, was there in these articles of Christian doctrine? Why was he to be condemned, neither heard, nor convicted?

His serene majesty saw how many princes, how many states in Germany, and also how many persons of the greatest wisdom, now supported the Lutheran principles; and he wished that it might please Christ, by his distinguishing mercy, to add king Henry to the number, and separate him from the dominion of the Papal tyranny over the souls of men.

In this humiliation of Luther, though the purity of his motives is by no means to be suspected, and

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though he surrendered not a single iota of the articles of religion for which he had so long contended, yet some, perhaps, might be found among his admirers, who thought that he had gone quite far enough, either for the dignity of a leading reformer, or the simplicity of a follower of Christ. With such, even of his sincere friends, Luther could certainly find but little pity, under his disappointment from the failure of his attempt at reconciliation with Henry; while his avowed adversaries would as certainly triumph, in the rebuff he met with from the haughty and indignant monarch.

Henry reproached him with levity and inconstancy. "It was no wonder," he said, "that he had calumniated Wolsey, when, for seven years past, he had spared no dignity, divine or human, civil or ecclesiastic. He had blasphemed the saints, treated the apostles with contempt, and despised the holy Mother of Christ. Cardinal Wolsey was peculiarly dear to him, as one who did great service to the kingdom of England in general, and was distinguished by his constant care in guarding the country from the contagion of the Lutheran heresy.—Lastly, he charged Luther with having, at the instigation of the devil, made a sacrilegious and incestuous marriage: in this he had committed an execrable crime; a crime, for which, had he been under the old Roman Government, the Vestal nun whom he had married must have been buried alive, and he himself have been cut to pieces with stripes *."

Luther's Concessions to Duke George of Saxony.

About three months after Luther had made submission to Henry VIII., he resolved to try the effect of a similar step upon the mind of his bitter persecutor, George of Saxony.—So early as the year 1523, count Albert of Mansfeld, a friend of the Reformation, had exhorted Luther to endeavour, by milder language, to moderate, if possible, the

* Maimbourg in Seck. 37. Sleidan. VI. 145. Cochlæus, 121.

ferocity of the Saxon tyrant; and he had answered to this effect: "I am ready, provided I do not sacrifice the glory of the Gospel, to offer my bounden duty and service, as becomes a Christian, not only to the Duke George, but to all my enemies; and I allow you to promise him, on my part, all the obedience he can desire, if he will but desist from committing outrages against the word of God. On the other hand, if he be determined to rage in this manner, he may rest assured that there is nothing can be mentioned to which I am less disposed, than to humour his blind, wretched, and furious passions. I could not have thought there had been in the head of this duke so much folly and madness *." CENT. XVI.

In the year 1525, Luther had again been made to believe, as he himself assures us, on the authority of many great and excellent characters, subjects of the Duke George, that he might, by writing to that prince in a spirit of mildness and moderation, certainly induce him in a short time to become a warm friend, instead of a cruel prosecutor, of the Gospel. Accordingly, he wrote to him in substance, as follows:

He confessed, that, among others, he had treated his highness with some asperity; but that, in the mean time, he had also edited such sermons and various lucubrations of a practical and consolatory stamp, as must prove to a demonstration that he had no malevolence towards any creature, and that the great object of all his labours, contentions, and dangers, was to do good to mankind.

It was a great grief to him to have been informed that his highness became more and more violent. On that account, he had resolved to admonish him in a respectful and an affectionate manner;—perhaps this was the last letter he should ever write to him. He called to witness God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, as far as his

* Ep. II. 134. 6. Com. de Luth. CLV.

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most secret thoughts were known to himself, and which God certainly knew, he was influenced entirely by a sense of duty, and a desire to promote the salvation of his highness.

He came, he said, with tears, and he laid his very heart at the feet of his highness, and humbly entreated him to be no longer hostile to the doctrine of Luther.

For though the duke did not believe that Luther preached the word of God, yet he himself was so fully convinced of it, that he was constrained to be deeply concerned for the state of his highness's soul; and to watch, and pray, for him, and not to be weary of exhorting him, if by any means he might be the instrument of delivering him from the jaws of Satan, and presenting him to Christ. He entreated the duke not to despise him on account of his low rank or meanness. Almighty God, on one occasion, had made use even of the organs of speech of an ass.—He said, he was perfectly sure that neither his highness nor any power on earth could retard, obstruct, extinguish, or oppress his doctrine. Men might rage against it, but facts had shown it would flourish, break through all obstacles, extend itself, and acquire stability. The reason was, it was not his doctrine, nor that of any human being. Nevertheless, it gave him great concern to be forced to see a prince of so many excellent endowments making horrid attempts to dash to pieces that perilous rock Jesus Christ.

He prayed God, by his Holy Spirit, to impress his highness's mind in such a manner, that this sincere and submissive letter might be an instance of what Solomon says, that 'a soft answer turneth away wrath.'

He was ready to make every concession to his highness, except the single one of giving up his doctrine. He could not do that without inflicting a deadly wound on his conscience. He begged par-

don for having ever used any hasty and improper words respecting him, and he cast himself entirely upon his highness's clemency. CENT. XVI.

On the other hand, he, from his heart, forgave the duke all the injurious treatment he had received from his highness: and he said, he would earnestly pray our Lord Jesus Christ to pardon his highness's great criminality, in having so much opposed the word of God, that even yet it had found no place in his dominions: nor did he doubt of his prayers being answered, provided his highness did but desist from persecuting the Protestants.

In conclusion, Luther intimated that he might be compelled by necessity, if the Duke George persisted in his cruel and tyrannical system of opposition to Christian liberty, to implore the assistance of Almighty God against him; and his highness might then learn, at length, what a sad thing it was to fight against God. As to himself and his despised associates, they had the most entire reliance on the Divine promises *.

The excessive bigotry and prejudice of the Saxon duke appears in almost every line of the answer which he gave to the preceding address. He charges Luther with having made Wittemberg the asylum of all the monks and nuns who had robbed churches and monasteries in his dominions: moreover, he then insinuates that the nuns were reduced to a most degraded, wretched, and scandalous situation. The devil, on account of all this mischief, might be a friend to Luther; but the duke could not be so. For surely he, who was sorry if any one of his very lowest rustics should lose even a cow, ought to be much more sorry, as being the servant of Christ, when he was robbed both of the souls and bodies of his own subjects!

In regard to Luther's Gospel, he said, it had been the cause why the holy sacraments, the sacred

* Luth. Op. II. 488. Sleidan. VI. 144.

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Mother of God, and all the Saints, had been blasphemed. These were the genuine fruits of his doctrines.

He then proceeds to charge Luther with having revived the old reprobated heresies, and abolished all the venerable modes of worshipping God; and concludes with blackening the disciples of the reformers, in every way that a prejudiced understanding and a virulent imagination could devise*.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE CONCESSIONS OF LUTHER.

LUTHER had too much fire in his composition to bear very patiently the insults and affronts of a German prince, or even of an English monarch. It appears, however, that at first he had determined to take no notice of the falsehoods and revilings of George of Saxony. "All my humble remonstrances," says he, "are lost upon him; nor shall I give him any answer. For, why should not I put up with these things: I, who am compelled to bear the furious opposition, even of my own Absaloms†."

He had likewise resolved upon silence in regard to Henry VIII.; till he found that his own submissive letter, together with the king's answer, had been translated into German, and were published in one little treatise, with a preface, in which he

* Acta Luth. Colch. 119.

† Luther alludes here to the violent and unhappy disputes which he had at that time with his brethren the reformers concerning the nature of the Sacrament. To Hausm. II. 310. In this letter he also says, "I am glad that my answer to Erasmus pleases you. I expect from him harsher language than from the Duke George. The viper will feel himself seized by the throat; and my moderation in the Bondage of the Will will have no effect upon him. God grant I may be disappointed; but I know that man's disposition; and I know the organs which Satan makes use of."

himself was represented as having at length openly retracted his religious principles *. CENT. XVI.

Luther instantly comprehended the policy of the papal party. He knew they were highly gratified in being allowed to reckon the king of England the avowed champion of their cause. They represented his majesty's letter as replete with good sense and erudition †; and they expected that the royal authority would have weight among the German populace.

It behoved, therefore, our watchful guardian of the infant Reformation to prevent, if possible, the mischievous consequences of his unsuccessful concessions; and it was with this view that, in the year 1527, he printed, IN THE GERMAN LANGUAGE, LUTHER'S ANSWER TO THE ABUSIVE EPISTLE OF THE KING OF ENGLAND. A. D. 1527.

In this spirited performance, the author bids open defiance, in future, to all the enemies of the pure Gospel of Christ; and expresses sorrow that he had ever been induced, in this religious contest, to try the effect of condescensions, civilities, and submissions. "His adversaries were of such a kind, that they misconstrued or perverted every thing he did. When he wrote with vehemence and severity, they called him arrogant and contentious: on the contrary, when he was gentle and submissive, it was instantly said, Luther flatters, or he retracts and owns his errors."—A radical dislike of the true doctrine, he said, was the bottom of all this misrepresentation.

"The arguments of his friends," he observed, "had certainly led him to hope, that, by a mild, humble, obsequious conduct, he might be the instrument of turning the hearts of several considerable personages; for example, Henry VIII.,

* His old adversary, Jerome Emser, was the translator. See Coch. 144. b. and Luth. Respons. ad Maled. II. 493. b.

† Coch. 127.

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George of Saxony, and Erasmus; but he had been utterly disappointed in all these instances. In like manner, because he had displayed a spirit of obedience before Cardinal Cajetan, that dignitary immediately concluded he was going to recant.—And it was precisely so at Worms, that the more anxiety he showed, and more pains he took, to conquer prejudice by humility and tameness, the more did the haughty spirits of his adversaries swell with pride and passion, and lift up their crests against him."

Luther then proceeds to ask IRONICALLY, whether, even now, it might not be proper for him to adopt the same lenient and pacific measures, and to dress up a sort of recantation, for the inspection of the archbishop of Mentz, the dukes of Bavaria, and Ferdinand? He trusted he might be received in their palaces, and treated with the most exquisite dainties.—"And what harm," he asks, "supposing his petition to be rejected?—No harm whatever," replies Luther, with great gravity, and laying aside all irony;—"for what has such a poor beggar as Luther to do in royal palaces? whom does he look for there? Does he now learn, for the first time, that Satan reigns in such places? Oh! foolish Luther, to seek Christ where Satan fixes his throne! What! has Christ any communion with Satan? Go, Luther, and try to find John the Baptist in splendid apartments, and among great men, clothed in purple and soft garments!!"

He insisted, he had a public character to sustain; and, on that account, he would not bear in silence to be represented as though he had retracted his doctrines: It was not true. In his most submissive letters, both to Henry VIII., and to George of Saxony, he said he had expressly guarded against any such injurious construction.

He was determined therefore, in future, to regulate his conduct by the following principles; namely,

1. In all matters where the ministry of the word of God was not concerned, he would not only submit to his superiors, but was ready to beg pardon even of children. As a private man, he merited nothing but eternal destruction at the Divine tribunal. But, in regard to the ministry, for which he considered himself as having a commission from Heaven, there was so much dignity in it, that no man, especially a tyrant, should ever find him give way, submit, or flatter. Lastly, he besought his heavenly Father to enable him to keep his resolution. His profession was, to teach the word of God; and as no man ought to impose silence in that respect, so there was a necessity that the word should continually be sounded in men's ears. It was useful, for support, for consolation, for rebuke, and for the pulling down of strong holds. "In spite of kings and princes," said Luther, "in spite of the whole world, and of Satan himself, I will never, with God's help, desert my station *." CENT. XVI.

In the latter part of this treatise, Luther laments most grievously on account of the unhappy schisms which had taken place among the Reformers, concerning the nature of the Eucharist. Some who took part against him in that controversy, he says, had been his friends, colleagues, and brethren, whom he had cherished as if they had been the children of his bosom; these he now considered as secret and domestic adversaries, and he treats them with inexcusable acrimony: but we need not here repeat what has been before observed respecting Luther's obstinacy and want of candour †. It may perhaps be thought worthy of remark, that throughout this small work, not a syllable escapes from its author, though then much displeased with the conduct both of his friends and his enemies, which indicates the reformer to have been dispirited or fatigued, much less broken down or worn out by dangers and

* Luth. Respons. II. 493. b.—497. † Page 200.

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troubles. Towards the conclusion, he DECLARES, that, for his part, he did not depend on human means. Christ was his shield, and the rock of his defence, in storms and tempests of every sort. It was much the same thing to him, who deserted, or who stood firm to the cause. "Therefore, if any one disliked the business in which he was embarked, let him," said he, "tack about * and run away. Whatever happened, he should constantly endeavour to make the best of the existing circumstances. —Who," he asked, "supported him in the beginning of this struggle, when he stood alone? And now he desired no one to take part with him, unless he did so voluntarily. It was a great mistake to suppose that he had recanted; he never had recanted, nor ever would. On the contrary, he was, by Divine grace, wonderfully confirmed in the faith, and that daily, more and more; so far was he from recanting one tittle of his doctrine;—whereas, in the writings of all his adversaries, open and secret, he saw manifest symptoms of languor and want of nerves. But, whatever might take place, his joy would constantly be proportionate to those exertions, which, on reflection, he could conscientiously affirm he had made for the welfare of the Church: and, without the imputation of arrogance, he might boldly assert, that, through his instrumentality, the Sacred Scriptures were now so effectually cleared of rubbish, and so well explained and illustrated, that at no period within the last thousand years had they been more generally known, or better understood."

Luther concludes his little treatise with giving thanks to God for the extraordinary prosperity of the church to which he belonged, and for the failure of the disgraceful attempts of its enemies. He owned there were some who had forsaken the simplicity of the truth; but that, he said, was no new

* "Vela vertat."

thing in the history of religion. The Jews revolted from Jesus Christ; and so did Galatia and Asia from St. Paul. It ought rather to be matter of surprise, that when the world was destroyed by the flood, and Sodom and Gomorrah by fire, there should nevertheless have been found eight persons who survived the former ruin, and three righteous characters who escaped from the latter. "Let those," continued he, "who please, revolt from us: it is not in our power to prevent instances of desertion. But it is our duty, after that men refuse to listen to admonition, to express publicly our disapprobation of their conduct. CENT. XVI.

"May the eternal God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ protect us, and keep us firm in the profession of his Gospel. Amen."

CONTINUATION OF CHAP. XIII.

1. PROGRESS OF THE REFORMATION UNDER JOHN THE ELECTOR OF SAXONY.
2. NEW REGULATIONS AT WITTEMBERG, BOTH IN THE CHURCH AND IN THE UNIVERSITY; THROUGH THE ADVICE OF LUTHER.
3. THE LANDGRAVE OF HESSE, AS WELL AS JOHN FREDERIC, SON OF THE ELECTOR, FAVOURS THE REFORMATION.
4. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EVANGELICAL RELIGION IN SEVERAL PLACES.
5. PERSECUTIONS.—MARTYRS.
6. SERMONS, LETTERS, AND OTHER WRITINGS OF LUTHER.
7. WRITINGS OF LUTHER, ZUINGLE, AND OTHER EMINENT REFORMERS, ON THE NATURE OF THE SACRAMENT.

1. Progress of the Reformation in Saxony.

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John, the new elector of Saxony, conducted the religious concerns of his dominions in a manner quite different from that of his brother and predecessor, Frederic. The latter connived at and tolerated, rather than avowed and established the alterations introduced by Luther and his associates. But the former no sooner found himself in possession of the sovereign authority, than he exercised it with resolution and activity, by forming new ecclesiastical constitutions, modelled on the principles of the great Reformer.

The natural dispositions of these two princes, as well as the circumstances in which they were respectively placed, led to this difference of political procedure. The extraordinary prudence and moderation by which Frederic had justly merited the surname of the Wise, constantly induced him to temporize with the Pope and his Cardinals, and to hope for the restoration of peace and union among the dissentient parties. Educated, moreover, under the bondage of papal mystery and papal domination, of his own judgment he scarcely dared to stir a single step from the beaten path of implicit submission. Yet, on the other hand, the pious and tender conscience of this prince prevented him from resisting many of the bold innovations of Luther, though manifestly levelled against the Romish corruptions and superstitions. Add to this, he had a great reverence for the Holy Scriptures, and also a high opinion both of the knowledge and the integrity of the Reformer in interpreting them; and hence, in various instances, he not only did not oppose, but encouraged, though with secrecy and reserve, his religious plans and propositions.

Still, another circumstance of importance has not yet been mentioned. When Luther first ventured to withstand the pretensions of the Roman hierarchy, the points in dispute were little understood; the contest was full of danger; and it required more than even the foresight of Frederic the Wise to be able to predict the issue; whereas the battle was half won when John first assumed the reins of government. The minds of men, by study and reflection, and by numerous publications both of the controversial and of the sober didactic kind, were become much enlightened in matters of religion. The spirit of reformation was spreading in all directions; and though it might have been difficult for a prince like Frederic, who for a long time had, in general, been in the habit of sanctioning and enforcing the ordinances of the Romish church, to declare open hostilities against the pope's supremacy, his brother John, now become Elector, could feel little embarrassment of this sort. Sound policy, as well as reason and justice, would dictate to the new sovereign the wisdom of making a stand, from the very commencement of his government, against the illegal and exorbitant pretensions of the Roman See. Happily, this excellent prince was well qualified by nature for the part which he had to act at this critical juncture. For though the Elector John is no where celebrated for his profound skill in the science of politics, yet his moral endowments and steady temper have procured him with posterity the illustrious titles of the GOOD and the CONSTANT. Accordingly, a character of this stamp could not fail to be convinced, that to temporize much longer with a corrupt and unprincipled hierarchy might prove fatal to the good cause. An appeal had been made to the tribunal of reason; and reason had decided already in a manner which had astonished all Europe. This astonishment was, therefore, to be roused to action, and converted into a bold

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resistance, at a moment when submissive and palliating methods must inevitably have afforded great advantage to the enemy. It is true, the battle was half won; but then it was not more than half won: for, in fact, there still remained, in opposition to Christian truth and liberty, an alarming combination of interested princes and prelates, who were supported by multitudes of their bigoted subjects and adherents, and who meditated no less than the entire annihilation of the infant reformation.

How justly may we admire and adore the goodness and wisdom of Providence, in raising up means so suitable for carrying forward and completing its sacred purposes! The zeal and constancy of John, the new elector of Saxony, was as loudly called for at the present crisis, as ever the extraordinary prudence and caution of his brother Frederic had been found absolutely necessary only a few years before, for the personal safety of Luther, and the success of his early endeavours to reform a corrupt ecclesiastical establishment.

We ought not to omit to mention, that John the CONSTANT had a most excellent coadjutor in his own son, John Frederic, who with the two names of his father John, and of his uncle Frederic, seems to have possessed the united virtues of both *.

Neither should it be forgotten, that even Frederic himself, the deceased Elector, had determined, a little before he died, to afford a more open and substantial support to the Evangelical preachers in his dominions †: and this circumstance, no doubt, was an additional motive to his brother and his nephew to enter on the work of reformation with vigour and dispatch.

* This prince was only about twenty-two years of age, and had then given many proofs of a truly pious disposition. Among other things he had seen and urged the expediency, and even the necessity, of a general visitation of the Church. Com. Luth. CLXXVII.

† Page 246.

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2. New Regulations at Wittemberg, both in the Church and in the University, through the advice of Luther.

The university and the collegiate church of Wittemberg soon experienced a salutary renovation; a new order of public worship was provided; other churches began to be modelled after the plan of Wittemberg; and a general visitation was promised of all the churches throughout the electorate of Saxony*. John, and his son, John Frederic, showed the utmost readiness to adopt the counsels of Luther; but that zealous reformer did not always wait for their sanction, well aware of the difficulties and delays which his plans might often meet with at court, from the privy-counsellors of the prince. However, he did not neglect to transmit to the prince, in a respectful manner, the formularies of the new ecclesiastical rites and ceremonies which, with the advice of Melancthon and Pomeranus, he had drawn up, and which the reformers had actually begun to use at Wittemberg. The sacrament was there administered to the laity, for the first time, in the German instead of the Latin language, on Sunday the 29th of Oct. 1525†. The regulation of the public service of the church, and the appointment of well-qualified pastors, was a matter near the heart of the reformer. "I am entirely taken up," says he, in a letter to a worthy clergyman, "with confuting Erasmus; but I well know how much the parishes stand in need of reform. This is a heavy stone, which I am endeavouring to roll; and I will solicit the prince to lend his assistance. I am convinced that all we do is to no purpose, if regular officiating pastors are not appointed. To this day our own parish is not settled. What must become of the rest? I am

First Administration of the Sacrament to the Laity in the German Language at Wittemberg, October, A. D. 1525.

* Comment. de Luth. VII. p. 24. † Id. p. 23.

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overwhelmed with their complaints daily. Satan also is at work. I beg you to visit all the parishes you can. The prince is far from being displeased with our exertions; and I have a great desire to finish this business by one effective effort*."

The Elector was so far from disapproving the new regulations of Luther, that he sent two of his counsellors to confirm them publicly, and to carry the same system to a still greater extent. The Reformer himself, however, appears to have been the leading counsellor at this important crisis. He stated, in writing, at full length, the situation of the University; how sadly it was on the decay, considered as a seminary of learning and piety: and he entreated the prince to send commissioners to fix the salaries of the professors and lecturers. He explained to him what steps he himself had actually ventured to take, both in regard to the academical lectures and the divine services. He observed, that though he might have been, perhaps, too troublesome in this business, or even shown too much distrust of the Elector's paternal care, yet he had this excuse to plead, namely, that the fruit of his conduct, however faulty or indefensible it might have been, had proved no less than the means of preserving the University from instant dissolution.

Luther with great seriousness admonished the Elector to make some provision for the poor labouring clergy; and also to amend the proceedings of the ecclesiastical courts. The Elector took all this in excellent part; but appears to have been considerably startled at the idea of augmenting the salaries of the clergy out of his own treasury. "That," he said, "would be a matter of great difficulty;" and he asked Luther what he had to propose on the subject. The answer was simply this: "In the general visitation of the whole country, let there be taken an accurate account of all the ancient reve-

Augmentation of the Salaries of the Clergy.

* To Hausman, II. 300, b. To Langus, II. 301, b.

nues; and if these be found insufficient for the purpose, then let the suitable payments to the officiating clergy be made from new imposts on the respective towns and parishes, which they may well bear, being now relieved from many popish oppressions." Likewise, to a similar inquiry concerning the augmentation of the academical salaries, Luther replied, "There is an abundance of means for this purpose from the many vacant offices; for the number of the clergy in the collegiate church of All Saints is now reduced from eighty to eighteen. All the rest are either dead, or have left their situations."

The most experienced financier could scarcely have returned a better answer to the question.

The due application of the surplus funds of this rich church of Wittemberg had been, for some time past, an object of considerable attention and difficulty*. The elector Frederic, supported by the older members of the chapter, for a long time had resisted the abolition of private masses; and during the altercations on this point in 1523, he had even threatened the sturdy reformers with the sequestration of the ecclesiastical salaries, unless they continued to observe strictly their ancient institutions. Luther, however, in a matter of great importance, was not to be discouraged by disappointment or opposition. He pressed the late Elector afresh on the same subject, with spirit and address; and as there were then three new canons, whose consciences would not permit them to comply with the papal usages, he entreated the prince to allow their stipends to be employed for the advantage of the professors and students of the University. The answer of Frederic was now in all respects gracious and favourable, and afforded a good hope that Luther's ideas would be adopted. In fact, by connivance rather than by express directions, that prince had permitted

* Pages 78 and 79. Also Seck. 276.

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the redundant ecclesiastical wealth to be gradually diverted into the channels above mentioned. This redundant wealth was become very considerable, from the abolition of private masses, and many other protestant innovations. But it is allowed by historians, that not one halfpenny of it was ever applied by Frederic to his own specific emolument *.

Such disinterested conduct has rendered his memory truly illustrious; and is a complete refutation of the rash aspersions of those who, either through ignorance or malice, would insinuate that this excellent prince favoured the Reformation from motives of avarice, and secret intentions of plundering the opulent ecclesiastics. However, the Elector John, with a more enlightened conscience, and a more magnanimous spirit, not only confirmed what had been barely permitted by his predecessor during the last years of his life, but also gave the revenues of the deserted monasteries † for the purpose of maintaining the parochial clergy and the public instructors, both in the churches and the schools ‡. He suffered nothing to come into competition with the Reformation, as an object of his concern: and as he was undoubtedly the first prince in Germany who openly both resisted the popish doctrines and discipline, and established the new system of the Wittemberg theologian, he has been justly denominated the SECOND PARENT and founder of the Lutheran church §.

* Seck. 276.

† During the tumults and the wars with the Peasants, many of the monasteries were plundered or deserted, in addition to those which by degrees had been evacuated before. Seck. 24.

‡ Comment. Luth. II. XXXVI. Beausobre, III, 201.

§ Moshem. Gnodalius de Bell. Rust.

3. THE LANDGRAVE OF HESSE, AS WELL AS JOHN FREDERIC, SON OF THE ELECTOR, FAVOURS THE REFORMATION.

THE laudable efforts of the Elector and his son were much encouraged by the friendly dispositions of their neighbour, Philip, the landgrave of Hesse. These dispositions had appeared at a conference which they had had with the landgrave at Creutzberg, only a few weeks before the death of Frederic; when he had declared, that rather than be a deserter from the word of God, he would lose his wealth, his dominions, and even his life. Luther, whose active and comprehensive eye was in every corner, writes thus to Spalatinus on this occasion: "I rejoice that the prince of Hesse has had a conversation with our princes. I hope it will be to the advantage of the Gospel*."

But the duke George of Saxony was a lamentable obstacle to any religious association which did not

* There is something so curious in the whole letter, that I will venture to give the Reader the substance of it. It should seem that certain mock suns, as they are termed by astronomers, had been observed in the heavens; and Spalatinus had sent Luther a drawing of the appearances, with the judgment of Melancthon upon them. This excellent Reformer is known to have been addicted to astrology. Luther begins:

"Grace and peace. I return you the drawings of the solar appearances. They are divine prodigies, my Spalatinus; but it is not my province to comprehend their meaning. I do not pretend to foretel the events signified by such things. That red bloody sun which appeared in the west, seems to denote the king of France; and the bright sun in the middle, the Emperor. This is Melancthon's opinion: at the same time, they indicate the Day of Judgment. I rejoice that the prince of Hesse has had a conversation with our princes. I hope it will be to the advantage of the Gospel. I have here a new species of fanatics from Antwerp, who assert that the Holy Spirit is nothing more than men's natural reason and understanding. How does Satan rage every where against the Word! And this I reckon by no means the slightest mark of the approaching end; namely, that Satan perceives the day is at hand, and pours forth his final fury. MARTIN LUTHER." Ep. II. 278.

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profess, as the basis of union, implicit obedience to the Roman See: and the opposition of this veteran papist was at any time to be dreaded, not merely on account of his wealth and the number of his subjects, but also the situation of his provinces, which lay enclosed in the electorate of Saxony. Philip of Hesse was his son-in-law, and was sanguine enough to entertain the hope of gaining the duke George to the cause of the Gospel, by writing to him a brief exhortation, full of piety and affection. George sternly replied, "That he should commit the cause to God; for that after a hundred years it would appear who was right and who was wrong."—The honest landgrave, like most young converts, had not yet been taught, by experience, how exceedingly perverse and obdurate men usually become by being long hackneyed in the ways of Pharisaical religion; but this rough answer of the father-in-law was an instructive lesson, no doubt, to his son-in-law Philip. The same answer produced reflections in the truly Christian mind of the young prince John Frederic, which deserve to be remembered. "I am shocked," said he, "at the sentiments contained in the letter of George, especially at his saying, the truth will appear after a hundred years. What sort of faith is that which requires an experiment to support it? Assuredly, there is nothing of the nature of faith, where a man will not believe till he is convinced by experience. St. Paul says, 'Faith comes by hearing;' not by experience. I am grieved at the poor prince's situation; for if he will not believe what is true and right till after trial has been made, and, also, if during the trial he is determined to refuse obedience to the word of God, he may defer the important business too long, that is, till there be no room for repentance. I would have every method used to cure him of his attachment to Popery, if, by the grace of God, there be a possibility of doing it. But I greatly fear all will be to no purpose; and that God will

harden him, like Pharaoh, so that he will neither receive his Word, nor regard his signal providences *." CENT. XVI.

4. The establishment of Evangelical religion in several places.

The unhappy duke George must have suffered considerable mortification on account of the increasing propagation of Evangelical truth during the year 1525. The magistrates of several of the imperial cities adopted the Reformation in form †. At Nuremberg there was a public conference, in full senate, and in the presence of many of the inhabitants, between Osiander at the head of several of the Evangelical teachers on the one part, and five leading preachers of the Papal party on the other; the issue of which was, that there should be no more sermons or ceremonies at the monasteries, and that the monks should no longer be exempted from the usual burdens of the rest of the inhabitants ‡. Hagenau in Alsace received the Divine word from Wolffgang Capito, who was a native of Hagenau, and had been called thither from Strasburg to strengthen the cause of the Protestant party. Capito administered the Sacrament on Palm Sunday, according to the Scripture method: and on Easter Sunday, without using salt, oil, or any papistical ceremony, he baptized, before a great multitude, who had flocked together to see the novelty, a child of a principal inhabitant called Wendelinus, by the name of Josiah; the father intimating thereby, that the book of the law was found in the reign of Josiah, and in consequence the true worship of God restored, so the Holy Bible, which had been in a manner lost during the Papacy, was, through the goodness of God, found again on the birth of his little Josiah,

* Seck. II. 35. † Beausobre.
‡ Scult. 301.

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and the Scriptural doctrine of Salvation restored to Germany *. At Northusa, in Thuringia, the inhabitants met together, read over Luther's early writings on the Reformation, conferred on the several points, acknowledged the errors of Popery, and determined to establish a purer church. The magistrates seconded the wishes of the people, and appointed the prior of the Augustine monastery to preach the Gospel in St. Peter's church †.

Several counties also of the empire were evangelized about the same time; for example, those of Hanau, Altenburg, and Tecklenburg. In the Marchionate of Lusatia, the two elegant and rich cities of Gorlitz and Lauban experienced a similar improvement. The clergy of the neighbouring villages assembled in the city of Gorlitz, and there publicly renounced the authority and jurisdiction of their popish diocesan, and at the same time abolished many of the Romish customs and vanities. At Dantzic, one of the most celebrated marts of the North, the progress of the Gospel was astonishing. "You may learn," says Luther, "from one of the clergy of Dantzic, who is come here on the express errand of requesting the prince to permit Pomeranus to go among them, how wonderfully Christ is at work in that place. We cannot well spare him; yet in so important an Evangelical concern, we ought, I think, to give way. Who knows what God may do through HIS instrumentality? Let us neither obstruct so extraordinary a call, nor pretend to be ignorant of its meaning. If I were called in this manner ‡, I should not dare to refuse: I would go instantly!"

I am persuaded no Christian reader will be fatigued with perusing such extracts as these, or think them ill placed in a history of the Church of Christ. They introduce us into the very secret corners of the hearts of the Saxon divines, and prove, beyond

* Scult. 294. † Id. 293.
‡ Id. 288. and Com. Luth. II. 12.

contradiction, what was the real spirit of the Reformation at this blessed season. Infidel or sceptical historians can easily invent motives and causes which discredit religion: it is more gratifying to the hostile tempers of such men, and also gives them abundantly less trouble, to indulge their imaginations in forming perverse and groundless conjectures, than to exercise a cool and dispassionate judgment in a laborious search after truth: there is, however, a pleasure in attaining a satisfactory conviction upon a great and interesting subject, which is the inestimable reward of an honest and patient search after truth, and which is utterly unknown to the prejudiced writers of the stamp here alluded to, however brilliant may be their talents, however elegant their compositions.

In this brief review of the increase of Evangelical light, we must not omit to mention what happened at Francfort on the Main. The inhabitants, through the instructions of two laborious Evangelical preachers, had acquired such an insight into the corruptions and abuses of the papal system, that they assembled in a tumultuous manner a little before Easter, and insisted on the abolition of the popish mass and other ceremonies. The senate interfered, and informed the ecclesiastics of the Papal party, that if they expected the support and defence of the magistrates, they must confute, by the word of God, those tenets of the Evangelical teachers which maintained that the MASS WAS NOT A SACRIFICE. Finding this impossible, the papistical preachers quitted three of the principal churches, which were immediately occupied by the reformers.

The successful labours at Breslaw of that eminent divine, Doctor Hesse, and of his assistant Moiban, have already been mentioned*. The good cause continued to prosper: most of the towns

* Page 145.

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and cities of Silesia followed the example of their capital; and their excellent bishops, James of Saltza, and Balthazar of Promnitz, are recorded with veneration in the annals of the revival of pure religion, on account of their extraordinary zeal, piety, and prudence *.

5. Persecutions.—Martyrs.

This glorious progress of the truth, and fall of Antichrist, did not take place without the shedding of some blood of the martyrs.

James Pavan of Bologne having been seized in the preceding year, on account of his profession of pure Christianity, had recanted through fear of death. In the course of the present year of 1525, he became bold again in the cause of the Gospel; he preached openly on the nature of the Sacrament; and, agreeably to his own express wish, was burnt alive at Paris. He surrendered his life, in the moment of trial, with the utmost cheerfulness.

James Pavan burnt alive at Paris.

A German, named Wolffgangus Schuch, had been appointed pastor of one of the towns of Lorraine, and during his faithful ministry had abolished the mass, and the worship of images and idols. His congregation were accused of disloyalty to the duke of Lorraine. The duke threatened to destroy the town with fire and sword. W. Schuch judged it his duty to step forward voluntarily, and defend his townsmen, though at the peril of his life. He composed a confession of his faith; and was, on the eve of publishing it when he was suddenly cast into a filthy dungeon, and condemned to the flames. On hearing his sentence, he broke out into the 122d Psalm: and when in the fire itself he sung the 51st Psalm.

Wolffgangus Schuch burnt in Lorraine.

We are told by Abraham Scultetus, one of the most candid and credible historians that ever wrote,

* Scult. 303.

that the ecclesiastical judge of Schuch, and also his assessor, who was an abbot, both died of sudden deaths a very little time after: and the duke of Lorraine took pains to convince his courtiers, that nothing more was necessary for salvation than to know Paternoster and Ave Maria *.

Bernard, a Carmelite friar, burnt at Mechlin in Brabant.

At Mechlin in Brabant, one Bernard, a Carmelite friar, is mentioned by Luther as having been burnt on account of his open profession of the Gospel †. And at the Hague in Holland, a clergyman, named John de Backer, scarcely 27 years old, after many long and vexatious examinations, by the papistical inquisitors, merited the crown of martyrdom. The steady good sense and piety which appeared in this man during his imprisonment, and his uncommon faith and patience in the midst of the flames, will call for some further notice in the Appendix.

6. Sermons, letters, and other writings of Luther.

Amidst the new ecclesiastical establishment and regulations, which Luther, under the auspices of the Elector and his son, was rapidly introducing into Saxony, he still found time for preaching the word of God, and for various useful publications. In reflecting on THIS PART of the labours of the Saxon Reformer, it may in some measure lessen our surprise, if we advert to two things, both of which are beyond dispute: First, his unparalleled industry; time with him was always a precious thing: Secondly, his vast fund of religious knowledge, the result of long and patient study of the Holy Scriptures. But, in regard to the other part, namely, how Martin Luther, who had spent so large a portion of his life in a monastery, and even now was far from being advanced in years, attained such consummate

* Scult. 317. † Ep. II. 293.
‡ Appendix, John de Backer. Brandt. I. 52.

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prudence and discretion for the conduct of practical concerns in worldly affairs, may be a matter both of curious inquiry and just admiration. Certainly, it is easier to account for his numerous sermons, commentaries, and theological tracts, than for his wise institutions, both in the Church and the University, where he had new offices and ranks and orders to arrange, new laws and discipline to digest; where the ecclesiastical and academical revenues were in the utmost confusion, redundant on some accounts, defective on others; and, lastly, where the distribution of the same required fresh inspections and reviews, as well as the most judicious and impartial adjustments. Pious minds, however, who believe that the hearts of men are prepared and directed by a Divine superintending agency, especially on great occasions, will have no great difficulty here. And in regard to those who are disposed to explain the course of human events by what are called natural causes, they should, in the first place, recollect distinctly what were the specific endowments of Luther, allowed by all who are well acquainted with his history; namely, a conscientious integrity, incapable of being warped by selfish and interested considerations; a clear and comprehensive understanding, furnishing an almost instinctive view of the measures to be adopted in the most critical circumstances; a spirited and courageous temper, constantly impelling him to decision and dispatch. Then, in the second place, they may be put in mind, that whatever pains they would take to exclude Almighty God from the government of his own creation, they cannot deny that at the very period when the revealed religion was most deplorably corrupted and defiled by human devices, and when there was the greatest need of a champion to contend with Antichrist, there was actually raised up in Saxony a personage qualified in this uncommon degree to fight manfully under the

banners of Christ; and to restore his Church to its genuine beauty and simplicity. CENT. XVI.

Modern philosophers, as they are called, are apt to disregard the statement of such premises as these, merely, it should seem, because they do not relish the inferences to which they lead unavoidably.

Some account of Luther's familiar exposition of the book of Deuteronomy has already been given in a letter which he wrote to the bishop of Samland *. The brief additions to that account, which I may now be allowed to make, will by no means do justice to so excellent a performance; but they will tend to illustrate the rare talents of the author, and his happy turn for interpreting Scripture. The following are, in substance, some of his very wholesome practical directions.

"Let the Christian reader's first object always be to find out the literal meaning of the word of God; for this, and this alone, is the whole foundation of faith, and of Christian theology. It is the very substance of Christianity; the only thing which stands its ground in distress and temptation: it is what overcomes the gates of hell, together with sin and death, and triumphs, to the praise and glory of God. Allegories are often of a doubtful nature, depending on human conjecture and opinion; for which reason Jerome and Origen, and other fathers of the same stamp, nay, I may add, all the old Alexandrian school, should be read with the greatest caution. An excessive esteem for these has gradually introduced a most mischievous taste among later writers; who have gone such lengths, as to support the most extravagant absurdities by Scriptural expressions. Jerome complains of this practice in his own time, and yet he himself is guilty of it. In our days there are some commentators, who, wherever they find in Scripture a word of the feminine gender, understand it to mean the

* Page 179.

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Virgin Mary; and hence, almost all the revealed word is made to treat of the Blessed Virgin. Wherefore we ought always to observe St. Paul's rule; not to build upon wood, hay, and stubble, but upon gold, silver, and precious stones; that is, an allegory should never be made the foundation of any doctrine, but be introduced as a secondary thing, to confirm, to adorn, to enrich a Christian article of faith. Never produce an allegory to support your sentiment; on the contrary, take care that your allegory rest on some just sentiment as a foundation, which, by its aptness and similitude, it is calculated to illustrate."

The author's observations on the use of pictures and images are extremely judicious.

He tells us he was not very fond of them, and would rather that no such thing was placed in churches. Not that his sole reason against them was the fear of their being worshipped as idols; for he thinks that did but seldom happen: he had another objection, namely, the confidence which men were disposed to place in them as meritorious works, especially if they were beautiful and costly: men were apt to fancy that they had pleased God in some way by spending money in his service; whereas, in fact, the whole of what is so expended might be employed to much better purpose in relieving the wants of their brethren.

In his annotations on the 15th chapter of Deuteronomy, ver. 4, he makes some very acute and sarcastic reflections on the pretended poverty of the papistical mendicant orders. That whole system, he shows, was contrary to the religion of the Bible; which no where inculcates poverty and want as a profession, but rather exhorts men to remove those evils by bounty and benevolence. The Papists boasted of their poverty and other sufferings, but they themselves were sleek and well fed. They said, they had no homes of their own; yet they

lived in palaces more superb than those of monarchs. They talked of hunger, but they devoured the provisions of every body: they talked of thirst, but their cellars were full: they boasted of sacrificing their lives, but they were never in the smallest danger, and spent their days in habits of pleasure. It was very true that there always would be poor persons among us, and so our Lord had observed; nevertheless, men were not to be exhorted to practise a voluntary poverty. Accordingly, we find in the Acts of the Apostles, there was not one person in want among the primitive Christians. We may hence learn the nature of those monastic vows in the papal scheme, which have poverty for their object. CENT. XVI.

Luther, with great justice, blames those divines, or lawyers, who torture and twist the word of God, by endeavouring to make it bear upon particular questions before them. "You may take notice of this," says he, "in the most eminent theologians, in Augustine, and Bernard, and even in the more ancient fathers, Cyprian and Tertullian, who, in their PUBLIC DISCOURSES, handle the Scriptures perfectly aright, but are very apt to pervert it in their CONTROVERSIAL WRITINGS. Consult the writers against Arius, consult Jerome against Jovian, Augustine against the Manichees, Bernard against Free Will, and you will be convinced of the truth of my assertion!"

On Deuteronomy xviii. ver. 18 to 20, where God promises to raise up a prophet like unto Moses, and declares, that "whoever will not hearken unto the words which that prophet shall speak in God's name, HE will require it of him," Luther makes excellent reflections, extremely applicable to his own times. For example: "The furious popes and princes of the present day attempt by violence to bring heretics to the faith; and they burn, or otherwise put to death, the

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obstinate. What is this, but arrogating to themselves the authority of God, and attempting to make men do by force, what neither they themselves nor any man can do? By this conduct they show they know nothing of the nature of Christ and his doctrine, nor of Moses's prediction in this place."

Throughout this performance of Luther, there is a richness of matter, expressed with a native vigorous eloquence, which will infallibly lay hold of the minds of such as read for practical improvement in their spiritual affections, rather than to find critical speculations for the mere entertainment of their understandings. The author is very full and very severe in his observations on the practices of fanatics and enthusiasts. His mind was sore at that time, and there was great reason for it, on account of the mischievous proceedings of Munzer and the rustic malcontents in the year 1525. No man was ever a more steady and consistent enemy to mysticism than Luther. His concluding admonitions on that subject well deserve our notice, as they contain the substance of God's ordinary method of leading souls to the kingdom of heaven. "Let us," says he, "never desert the pure doctrine of the Gospel. We are persuaded that the substance of our religion consists in faith, which is the gift of the Spirit, and comes by hearing the word of God. A previous and perfect mortification of sin is not required for this purpose; though there must be a previous conviction of sin and of its malignity, to humble and prepare us for the faith of Christ. Then follows the Gospel, which gives life and strength; and through that life and strength we must contend against the evil principle which remains in the flesh, and must aim at no less than the obtaining of a perfect victory over it. But we are to use the greatest possible care, never to attribute our justification before God to any sort of works whatever, but to faith alone in the heart, by which

man believeth unto righteousness *. Moreover, it becomes those Christians who are already justified, not to condemn their weaker brethren; for it is the glory of Christianity that we are directed to bear one another's burdens †. In the next place, we must remember not to permit our faith to become drowsy and unfruitful; which it certainly will do, if we neglect the mortification of the flesh. But here again we must guard against a twofold error; namely, lest we should suppose,—either that by our own acts of mortification we can certainly procure justification and the gift of the Spirit,—which is the doctrine of those insane prophets the Anabaptists;—or, that if we do not undergo certain processes of mortification, it will be impossible for us to be justified by the gift of the Spirit. Evangelical knowledge in its purity is a rare and delicate thing, even in good and holy men. Often the very best Christians suffer through the malignant influence of the flesh, and the treacherous plausibility of works; for they are hereby led with an impetuosity of spirit to aim at external mortification and the performance of external works, rather than to press for faith and the Holy Spirit by importunate applications at the throne of Grace, in reliance on the written promises. They act as though faith and the Spirit came by works and mortification, whereas the contrary is the Scriptural order of things. This malignant mischievous propensity of the carnal disposition, which leads men to set so high a value on mortification and other performances, must itself be mortified with the utmost diligence; for it frequently imposes on very able men, and prevents them from seeing the efficacy of the word of God, which, after all, is the power of God unto salvation to every believer."

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In these instructive passages, our commentator has evidently his eye on the enthusiastic pretences

* Rom. x. † Galat. vi. 2.

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to mortification of Munzer and his followers*. Luther's doctrine is in perfect contrast to that of those wild fanatics; and is as sound and useful as theirs must ever prove false and mischievous. It appears to me, that one of his great excellencies as a divine, is the perspicuous and JUST ORDER in which he constantly places the several doctrines of practical Christianity, and their effects. He is, on all occasions, solicitous to show that the Christian life begins with, depends on, and is perfected through, the written Word. The law of God humbles men, and is the schoolmaster which teaches them that they can do nothing in their own strength †. Justification and peace of conscience are the gift of the Spirit, through faith in the Redeemer, without any works on our part. Hence we rejoice, and cry, Abba, Father. There is an end of servile fear, and of flying away from the presence of an angry God. There is, on the contrary, a filial access into the grace of our heavenly Father. This great internal change soon shows itself in external actions. As the heart believes, the tongue confesses ‡; and thus the Gospel is preached to others, and the kingdom of Christ is augmented. Then come the cross and tribulation, on account of the word of God; and these explore and strengthen faith, even to the full assurance of hope. The old man is mortified §; and the fruits of the new man, which are the proper proofs of the existence of faith and the Spirit, increase more and more, and show themselves in the love of our neighbour, and in an universal benignity, and disposition to peace and goodness ‖.

Our commentator, in his observations on the 21st and 22d verses of this same chapter of Deuteronomy, "How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?" &c. &c., resolves an

* Page 205. † Rom. iv. Gal. iii. Annotat. Deut. xviii.
‡ Romans iv. Annotat. Deut. xviii. § Rom. chap. v.
‖ Annot. Deut. and Galat. chap. v.

apparent contradiction, between the criterion here laid down, and what had been said before, in the thirteenth chapter. In the thirteenth chapter it is said, "If a prophet or dreamer of dreams giveth a sign or wonder, and the sign even cometh to pass, you shall not hearken unto that prophet, when his object is to make you serve other gods:" whereas, in the eighteenth chapter, and 22d verse, the rule of judging is, "If the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath NOT spoken, but the prophet hath spoken presumptuously." Luther's solution is this: When a doctrine has been once confirmed by Divine authority, or by miracles, and is received, we are not to believe an angel from heaven preaching a contrary doctrine; for God permits such things, merely to prove men, whether they love him, or not, with all their heart. But the case is different whenever a new doctrine is proposed for our assent: we ought not to give credit to it, unless it be confirmed by miracles. Having made this very sensible distinction, Luther concludes with telling us, that he had acted on these very principles in his treatment of those insane prophets, who pretended to hold daily converse with God, face to face, like Moses; and who, in general, boasted of having gifts of the Spirit beyond the Apostles themselves. He required them to work miracles, otherwise they were not to be believed. They promised they would do so. "But," says Luther, "to this day I neither see nor hear of any. Indeed, I told them with some degree of contempt, that MY GOD would take care that THEIR god should not do signs or miracles *."

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The sermons of Luther were very numerous; but it would lengthen this history too much to produce many extracts. In one of them, published about this time, he complains, "that if good morals

* Annot. Deut. Luth. Op. III. Witt.

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be preached, then men are apt to make a ladder of them, by which they may climb up to heaven; and, that in that way, through pride and a haughty confidence in their own merits, they sin more grievously than even by immoralities themselves; for that sort of pride is peculiarly odious to God; whereas he is always ready to receive the greatest sinners, whenever, in true penitence, they implore his forgiveness. On the other hand, if men are not pressed to holiness of life, impieties and dissolute manners are the consequence. The medium must therefore be observed. Good practice must be insisted on, but not trusted to for salvation. Few, (he said,) found the right road: for some led very bad lives; whilst others thought of meriting heaven by sanctimonious works, thus arrogating to themselves, as matter of right, what they ought to receive as the effect of mere mercy. What was this, but to despise the bounty of God, and to set up ourselves in opposition to it*?"

Faithful and intelligent teachers of the Gospel have always made the same complaint. The fact is, men are the same, in every age and climate, since the transgression of our first parents; and the identity of the common stock from which the human race has descended, is perhaps as clearly evinced by the manifest similarity of the depraved dispositions of the mind, as by the concurrence and agreement of those bodily marks and distinctions which are pointed out by natural historians as essentially constituting particular classes of beings. If the latter has been thought more to this purpose than the former, the advantage arises, I think, merely from this circumstance, that objects of the senses affect us sooner, and more universally, than considerations which are purely intellectual.

Most of the writings of Luther were published on the spur of the occasion, and have no preten-

* Tom. VIII. Alt. in Append. Seck. 32.

sions, in general, to the character of correct and finished compositions. The author was attentive to things; and was not only regardless of words, but even accustomed to the use of scholastic barbarisms. It was on this account that Erasmus had conceived him incapable of writing with such a degree of classical purity as appears in his reply to that accomplished scholar; who, in effect, was compelled to change his opinion of Luther's talent for Latinity. On ordinary occasions, the Reformer certainly neglected his style. His mind was absorbed by objects infinitely more momentous. But he appears to have been roused to some attention in this respect, by having to combat Erasmus; and, accordingly, he evinced on that occasion a considerable acquaintance with polite literature. CENT. XVI.

Having already given an account of the concessions which Luther made by letters, both to Henry VIII. of England, and to the Duke George of Saxony; and having also commended the self-government of the writer on those occasions, and his truly Christian motives; little more need be said in regard to those publications *. Perhaps the writing at all to such haughty and malevolent adversaries was not in itself a thoroughly judicious measure; and perhaps it might have been expected from the good sense and experience of Luther, that he should have foreseen the harm, or at least the little benefit which was likely to accrue from it. It is to the excessive ardour of his temper that we are usually to ascribe the practical errors of the Saxon Reformer. So, in this instance, it is as certain that honest zeal for the progress of the Reformation was the motive of Luther, as it is, that pride, rancour, and superstition, dictated the contemptuous answer of Henry. A spirit not dissimilar, the reader will have observed, pervades also the abusive answer of George of Saxony, though he was, in

* Pages 357—358.

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general, a much better character than the king of England.

Whoever carefully compares those letters which contain the unsuccessful submissions of Luther, with that animated performance, by which he hoped to repair his error, will be convinced how much more he was in his natural element, when battering fairly and openly the strongest holds of his adversaries, than when tampering with bigoted Roman-catholics, in fruitless negotiations and concessions *.

Luther, a short time before he ventured to administer the Lord's Supper in the German language, had had the precaution to compose and print a very useful little book, containing thirty-eight German hymns, with their appropriate tunes, for the express purpose of conveying and fixing in the memories of the common people, a deal of religious instruction in a very concise and agreeable manner. The subjects were,—parts of the catechism; leading articles of belief; prayers and thanksgivings: in fact, the book was a summary of Christian doctrine, expressed in very neat and elegant German metre; and so well managed, that the harmony and modulation of the voice agreed with the words and sentiments, and tended to raise the correspondent affections in the minds of the singers. On this account the author has been called the true Orpheus of Germany; and to his praise it is added, that he applied his knowledge of musical numbers and harmonies to the excitation of the most pious and fervid emotions in the soul †.

In the preface of this little work he supports the duty of church music, on the authority of David and Paul; at the same time he puts us in mind, that, in singing praises, we should have our eyes on Christ alone. "He had subjoined the suitable

* See page 363, for the account of it.

† Chytræus in Scultet. 315. Seck. Index, III.

tunes," he says, "to show that the fine arts were by no means abolished through the preaching of the Gospel; but that, in particular, the art of music should be employed to the glory of God; though he knew this sentiment was contrary to the romantic ideas of some teachers, who were disposed to allow nothing but what was purely intellectual."

The letters which our Reformer, in the exercise of his paternal care, wrote to the several pastors and congregations of the infant Evangelical churches, are numerous, and many of them replete with excellent matter. Of one of them, addressed to his Christian brethren at Antwerp, we must take some notice; first, because it affords a striking instance of Satan's activity, in raising up false teachers, whenever his kingdom is in peculiar danger from remarkable revivals of Christian truth; secondly, because it contains the writer's refutation of the calumny of having represented God as the author of sin; and thirdly, because the good annalist Scultetus speaks of this letter in the highest terms*. The most important parts of it are in substance as follow: "He had been informed," he said, "of the rise of some very dangerous spirits at Antwerp†:" and he believed it to be his duty to give his Christian brethren a little honest advice. He hoped they would take his friendly admonitions in good part; and also, being thus forewarned, would look well to themselves. The object of these false teachers was to confound and perplex, and to draw men from the light into darkness. Some of the articles of their faith were as follow:

1. Every man had the Holy Spirit.
2. The Holy Spirit signified neither more nor less than men's reason and understanding.
3. That all men were believers.

* Annal. 1525.

† These dangerous spirits have been just mentioned before in a letter of Luther's, at page 375, in the note.

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4. That there was no hell nor eternal punishment; and, That the body only was condemned.
5. That every soul would possess eternal life.
6. That natural reason taught us to do to our neighbour as we would he should do to us; and that to be so disposed was faith.
7. That by concupiscence men did not sin against the law, unless their wills were consenting.
8. That he who had not the Holy Spirit was incapable of sin, because he was devoid of reason.

"Now," said Luther, "there is not one of these articles, except the seventh, which merits the smallest attention; and ye will do well to treat both the doctrines, and those who maintain them, with contempt. One of these teachers came to me; and a more inconsistent, impudent, petulant, lying spirit I never saw or heard to speak. There is one point which he insisted on with the utmost pertinacity; namely, that God did not permit sin, because such permission could not take place without the will of God: for who could compel the Almighty to permit sin?"

The author then proceeds to this effect: "I have no doubt but the man will falsely accuse me to you, as though I had said that God has absolutely a pleasure in the existence of sin, for its own sake. To which charge I answer, that the representation is injurious and false. What I do maintain is this: That God has forbidden sin by the most express precepts; and that this part of his will is both perfectly clear, and also necessary for us to know. But how it happens that he should permit men to sin, and that they should consent to the perpetration of sinful actions, he has not thought proper that we should know; otherwise he certainly would have opened these matters to us,

had it been his will that we should have been made partakers of his secret counsel. St. Paul himself disapproves of these curious inquiries; 'Nay but, O man, who art thou, that repliest against God?'"

In conclusion, he exhorts his brethren not to listen to those contentious and troublesome spirits, who would harass their minds with profound speculations concerning the secret will of God. "Is it not enough that the commands of God have no ambiguity? God detests sin. That is sufficient for us; but how sin comes, and why he permits it, these are points which we should leave with Him. A servant ought not to inquire after his master's secrets, much less to know them: still abundantly less does it become a poor miserable creature to pry into the mysteries of the Divine Majesty, his Creator. See then that ye hold to what is useful and necessary; and avoid futile, trifling, contentious points, that tend nothing to edification. Once more; Avoid every thing that is above your comprehension, and rest in the plain precepts of God. To learn Christ and his commandments aright, even though a man does nothing else, requires a whole life *."

An attempt to poison Luther, Feb. 1525.

During these incessant labours of this indefatigable servant of God, his life was attempted to be taken away by poison. A Polish Jew, a doctor of medicine, came to Wittemberg, having agreed to do this business for two thousand pieces of gold. Luther describes him as a man of wonderful cunning and versatility; and as capable of committing any crime. The doctor and his accomplices were seized, and carried before a magistrate: but they refused to make any confession; and Luther entreated that they might be set at liberty, rather than be examined by TORTURE, according to the custom of those times. Nevertheless, he expresses his entire

* Aurif. Ep. II. 281.

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belief that he was the very man who had been pointed out to him by the letters of certain friends. He says, "he answers their description in all respects; and that every circumstance also concurred to identify the person of the Jew, and prove his guilt *."

7. Writings of Luther, Zuingle, and other eminent reformers, on the nature of the Sacrament.

Those labours of Luther, which he employed in the Sacramental controversy, can afford but little satisfaction to Christian readers. We are compelled, indeed, in reviewing them, to recognize that zeal and fervour, and conscientiousness, which ever marked the character of this great Reformer; but, alas! all these excellent qualities were in this instance sadly sullied, by a LAMENTABLE obstinacy and perverseness of temper †: Lamentable—not merely as displaying the defects of an eminent Christian; for where shall we find perfection?—not merely as leading this eminent Christian to act inconsistently, and in direct opposition to his general principles of toleration and mutual forbearance in all things not essential;—but lamentable, as very materially affecting the success and progress of the Reformation itself, by disuniting its leaders, and preventing a fraternal communion among them.

Progress of the Sacramental Controversy.

For some time past the leaven of contention had been deeply at work, and was now exerting its mischievous operation with greater strength and with less secrecy. The absurd argumentation of Carolstadt had given Luther a great advantage in the Sacramentarian dispute; but such able and learned divines as Zuingle and Ecolampadius were not to

* Amsdorf, II. 270. b. G. Spal. Id.

† Pages 200 and 226.

be overawed or silenced, either by the talents and knowledge, or by the authority and violence of Luther. As they were in a good cause, and were convinced both of the nonsense and of the non-necessity of having recourse to such a doctrine as that of Consubstantiation in the interpretation of Scripture, they resolved to oppose it with firmness and perseverance. CENT. XVI.

Luther, in his treatise against the Celestial Prophets *, had endeavoured to expose the novel ideas which had been broached by Carolstadt on the nature of the Eucharist. About the same time, or a little sooner, Zuingle published his sentiments on this subject, in a letter addressed to Matthew Albert, the pastor of Ruetlingen, who, as he had been informed, was then engaged in discussing the question with one of his brethren.

He opens his mind at once, expressing his apprehension, that either many persons most sadly mistake the matter, or else that he himself makes a greater mistake than they all; and further, that unless the just interpretation of Scripture throughout, and unless common sense and piety itself deceive him, divines had all missed their aim for a long time: but that he could not pretend, in the short compass of a letter, to enter into the history of the error now so prevalent. He intimates that Carolstadt had circulated among the people an ill-timed little pamphlet of three pages, intituled, On the EXECRABLE ABUSE OF THE EUCHARIST, in which there were many things that pleased, and some that displeased him. There was truth in the pamphlet, but it was delivered in a way rather to offend than to edify: Carolstadt had not rightly explained the matter. Moreover, Zuingle adds, that the same author was reported to have prepared another pamphlet, still much less to the purpose, in which, by his unreasonable scoffs and sneers, he had degraded the sub-

* Mentioned in page 211.

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ject: the people were already sufficiently alarmed with the novel ideas concerning the Sacrament, and such a mode of treating it seemed as if calculated on purpose to increase their aversion *.

The epistle to M. Albert appears to have been the first effort of the pen of Zuingle in the Sacramentarian controversy. Large extracts from the writings of the several combatants, who engaged in this contest, cannot be necessary in our times:—This, from Zuingle, it may be observed, furnishes an additional testimony to the truth of the account before given of the ungovernable spirit of Carolstadt.

Luther, in his treatise against the Celestial Prophets, answers Carolstadt's arguments against the real presence. He does not pretend to understand how the bread is bread, and, at the same time, the body of Christ; but insists on the necessity of adhering close to the words of Christ.

Bugenhagius Pomeranus published a letter, both in German and in Latin, against the NOVEL ERROR of the Sacramentarians †; in which he contends, that the argument of Zuingle, drawn from the words 'The flesh profiteth nothing,' is a mere DREAM of the imagination, when those words are adduced to show that 'This IS my body,' means, This SIGNIFIES my body. "The evangelists," he says, "never use the word IS in that sense; and, moreover, that the expression, 'The flesh profiteth nothing,' is not to be understood as applicable to the flesh of Christ, but to that carnal construction which the disciples of Christ were disposed to put upon the words of their master." Zuingle on this occasion answers smartly; "You say, that in arguing thus I do but DREAM. Be it so. I consider even this as a concession in some degree: for those who see nothing

* Op. Zuing. II. 153. Scult. 234.

† It is addressed to John Hesse, the excellent pastor of Breslaw. Hospin. II. 64.

in my argument must be COMPLETELY ASLEEP*." —Zuingle's reply to Bugenhagius is dated Oct. 1525. CENT. XVI.

But this excellent and learned Reformer had composed and published, some months before, in the course of the same year, a very elaborate commentary on true and false religion; in which he not only treats on all the great points both of natural and revealed theology, but also on the controverted questions between the Papists and Protestants, and, among others, on the meaning of the Eucharist. He undertook this work, he tells us, at the express desire of several learned and pious characters both of France and Italy; and though he attacks the corruptions, idolatry, and avarice of the Papacy in the plainest and most animated language, he boldly dedicates the treatise to Francis I. of France. It was, he said, a most Christian book; and Francis's title was that of 'His most Christian Majesty:' Moreover, the people of France were of old celebrated for their religion: Lastly, there was great intercourse between France and Germany; and as the Germans had begun to open their eyes to Evangelical light, the author felt it his duty to contribute to the restoration of those salutary beams in the neighbouring country. Men had been long in Egyptian bondage; and, in spite of the pointed admonitions of Christ and his apostles, had been so foolish as to serve more absurd false gods than any which the heathen nations ever served: for what nation, he asks, ever worshipped a poor mortal man just going to expire, as the modern nations had worshipped the Roman pontiff? Or when did kings and emperors FALL DOWN to adore the only great and good God? To KNEEL had by them been esteemed sufficient. Who ever kissed or embraced the feet of Christ, except particular persons from extraordinary affection? Whereas, on the contrary, no one is admitted to

* Zuingle ad Pom. Respon.

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speak to the Pope without first kissing the shoe of this god. Thus, he adds, as a punishment for our sins, we have been so long blind to this abominable idolatry *.

This performance of Zuingle, including an appendix on the Eucharist, consists of very nearly two hundred folio pages, and is a noble monument of the author's piety, learning, and intellectual powers, as well as a decisive proof of the blessed recovery of Christian truth in Switzerland at that time. It was scarcely possible but that a writer of this stamp should be conscious of his own strength. Accordingly, Zuingle, notwithstanding his moderation and pacific disposition in general, concludes his aforementioned letter to Bugenhagius with an animation and confidence bordering almost on menace or defiance. "Himself, and his brethren the Swiss divines," he said, "were not in habits of controversy; neither, as yet, had they mentioned by name any one person of the many who had formed erroneous judgments on the Eucharist and other popish tenets. But," continues he, "if either you or any other be determined at all events to have a contest with me, I certainly deprecate the thing exceedingly; yet if it cannot be avoided, I shall, under the shield of truth, and under the inspection and auspices of Christ, fight so as not like one that beateth the air. Moreover, I do exhort you and all others to abstain from that very bad custom of abuse. We ought to investigate the truth by Scripture and by reasons, and not by tribunitial clamours. We shall have plenty of enemies, and plenty of outcries against us, even though we conduct ourselves with the greatest possible moderation. Will the Roman see be silent? Will those princes be silent who are ashamed of the Gospel? Let us then follow after truth in its utmost purity. I do not think Antichrist can be completely subdued, unless this error of Consubstantiation be

* II. De Ver. et Fals. Rel. 158.

rooted up; and, as the truth has broken in upon us, we should not suffer ourselves to be led by human authority. CENT. XVI.

While Zuingle was thus opposing at Zurich the Lutheran tenet of Consubstantiation, Ecolampadius was employed in the same manner at Basil; and, to say the least, displayed equal learning, piety, and moderation. A full year before, he had preached a sermon on the Lord's Supper, which had made a great impression on the minds of the people, and was become the topic of general conversation. It was at this moment that the modesty and diffidence of Ecolampadius yielded to the entreaties of his friends, who were pressing him to publish his sentiments on the Sacramental controversy. Accordingly, he edited his celebrated treatise ON THE GENUINE MEANING OF OUR LORD'S WORDS, 'THIS IS MY BODY:' which drew from Erasmus that memorable eulogium on its accuracy and solidity, "—that it might deceive the very elect*:" and this he repeats in his letters even to Bedda and to the bishop of Lingen.

The senate of Basil were so much alarmed on the appearance of Ecolampadius's book, that they directed the sale of it to be suspended, till its contents should have undergone an examination. Erasmus was one of the censors on this occasion; and his report, as it is perfectly in the character of the man, will amuse the reader. "Mighty lords," says he, "at the instance of your Highnesses I have read the publication of John Ecolampadius; and, in my opinion, it is a learned, eloquent, and elaborate performance. I should be disposed to add, it is a pious performance, if any thing could be pious which opposes the JUDGMENT AND CONSENT OF THE CHURCH†."—Ecolampadius traces the Papistical

* See the note in page 320.

† Hospin. II. 57. Urstis. Chron. Bas. in Gerdes. Hist. Evan. Reform. II. 295. Or in Jortin's Appendix, XXXIV.

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tenet of the REAL PRESENCE to Peter Lombard; and contends, that every one of the fathers had held that the words 'This is my body,' were not to be taken literally. He dedicates his work to his brethren, the Christian divines throughout Suabia.

Of these divines, an assembly of fourteen met together at Hall in Suabia, and concurred in a reply to the sentiments of Ecolampadius. Brentius, however, is believed to have been the chief author of this composition. These good ministers maintained, that as the words of God, spoken on the occasion of the brazen serpent, namely, 'Every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live,' conveyed to the image of brass a healing efficacy, so the words used in the celebration of the Eucharist, 'This is my body,' caused the body of Christ to be united to the bread *.

Ecolampadius was in no wise intimidated by the joint efforts of the confederate divines. He replied to them immediately; and asserted, that the arguments which they had produced, tended to establish his own opinions. Zuingle animadverted with great severity on the rude manner in which, he said, they had treated that most harmless of men, Ecolampadius. He allowed it was a season when the press teemed with boisterous publications; but he most solemnly affirmed, that he had not seen any one in which there was so little to commend as in this of Brentius. Throughout the whole work there was a force put upon the Sacred Scriptures: there was also in it an unmeasurable haughtiness; and, lastly, the confederacy itself of the authors was novel and indecorous. To these fourteen persons, he said, he could oppose two hundred; for almost the whole world, either openly or privately, differed from them in sentiment. Yet these dictators had ostentatiously

* This book is entitled Syngramma Suevicum, de Verbis Cœnæ. Dupin. Scult. 250. Hosp. 60.

signed their names to a summary of doctrine on the Sacrament, which they had scarcely so much as explained to their own congregations. Their performance contained very little, except this slanderous accusation,—that those who differed from them were deluded by Satan;—a manifest proof of their own diabolical spirit! In regard to Ecolampadius, Zuingle affirmed, he was a model of piety and erudition; and, moreover, that many of those fourteen divines had derived from him what knowledge they had of languages; and that therefore their ungrateful and disrespectful conduct towards their instructor, was unworthy of the Christian character, and merited not only rebuke, but execration. Men might praise such writers as much as they pleased, but they would be beaten on this subject as often as they appeared in print. He could easily, he said, have restrained this effusion of resentment; but to see the heavenly doctrine attacked in such arrogant language, was more than any one ought to bear with patience *.—These observations of Zuingle are far from being conciliatory; nor was it probable that a man of Luther's temper should pass them over in silence. CENT. XVI.

The Strasburgians, however, were very laudably employed in endeavouring to repair the breach, which was growing wider and wider, between the Lutheran and the Helvetian churches. They even sent over Caselius, their professor of the Hebrew language, to Wittemberg, for the express purpose of promoting union and brotherly love among the contending parties. The answer with which this learned professor was charged by Luther to return to the Protestants at Strasburg, will at once prove both the nature of Caselius's commission to Wittemberg, and also that lamentable state of contention and irritation which at this juncture impeded the progress of the Reformation.

* II. Zuingle and Theob. Bil.

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Luther admitted, that nothing was more to be wished than peace and harmony. He had done, he said, every thing in his power to promote that end. The adversaries knew, in their consciences, that they were the first movers of the contest. It did not become him to be silent for ever, while Zuingle and Ecolampadius, by their successive pamphlets, raised such disturbances;—unless indeed he was to give up his ministry and the cure of souls. It was not to be borne, that they should continue to talk, cause confusion among his people, and weaken his authority, and that notwithstanding he must give way and hold his peace.

It had been said, he ought to abstain from railing. But how was it possible for him to confute or contradict, without condemning errors? and yet the language which was unavoidable on such an occasion, they called railing. He wished to know whether these extraordinary modest persons were or were not guilty of railing, when they traduced him and his friends in their books, under the denomination of FLESH-EATERS, worshippers of a God that could be eaten or turned into bread, deniers of the redemption by the cross. Such was their modesty; and thus were himself and his friends slandered. Hitherto, he had patiently submitted to this treatment; whereas his opponents could not bear to be told, that they erred in their interpretation of Scripture. He therefore informed them explicitly, that he would endure all this no longer.

He proceeds to say, he did not approve of the advice of the Strasburgians, that good Christians should be directed not to meddle with the question concerning the REAL PRESENCE, but should be exercised in the word and in faith. "In the VERY WORDS themselves*," he said, "was implied the presence of the body and blood; moreover, the attention of the common people had been so much

* This is my body.

roused by the dispersion of the numerous pamphlets of the Sacramentarians, that it could not now be diverted from the subject. They ought to have been silent at first: it was now too late to aim at silence." CENT. XVI.

In effect, either one party or the other, he said, must be considered as the ministers of Satan. There could be no medium. What agreement between Christ and Belial? He would be glad to have peace, but not at the expense of that peace towards God, which is purchased for us by Jesus Christ.

He therefore earnestly besought his brethren, by Christ Jesus himself, and by every thing in Christ that was dear, to avoid this pernicious error, and to cease from seducing the souls of men, to the very imminent danger of their salvation. Of their commendations of the holiness of Ecolampadius and Zuingle, and their respective churches, all men must rejoice to hear: at the same time, Luther warned them of the lengths to which Zuingle was disposed to go in the article of Original Sin; and he added, that he was so much disturbed by the sentiments contained in their letter, as not very well to comprehend what they meant either by the term Church or Holiness.

In conclusion, he admitted that the Sacramentarians, if they persisted, might do much mischief, but WOULD NEVER CONQUER. He lamented that Zuingle had taken so much offence at one of his expressions, namely, "that what he wrote MUST be true;" because this captious spirit, he conceived, was a proof that Zuingle harboured against him some secret grudge: and lastly, he asked upon what grounds THEIR BOASTING OF THEIR EXPERIENCES and of the witness of the Spirit was to be allowed, if Luther was to be denied the privilege of asserting in his turn, with equal confidence, what he knew to be true *.

The Papal party beheld these dissensions among

* Scult. 252. Luth. Ep. II. 302.

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the reformers with infinite satisfaction. "How dangerous," said they in triumph, "was it to desert the parent Church! Doubts, difficulties, and contentions, must be the inevitable consequence!" Moreover, as Luther's doctrine of Consubstantiation was much less offensive to them than that of the Sacramentarians, it was natural that they should, in this instance, prefer the Protestants of Saxony to those of Switzerland. We are told indeed that the Papists not only relaxed in their opposition and animosity to the former, but that they even praised them, exceedingly esteemed them, and almost heartily forgave them all the mischief they had done *. Spalatinus himself expressly informs us, that the rulers and inquisitors of Belgium gave a decided preference to the principles of the Saxon Reformer.

Nothing, however, could be further from the mind of Luther than any species of compromise with the Roman hierarchy. Between him and the Papists, there was not merely one, but many gulfs, which were absolutely impassable. The Sacramentarian tenet would have added another;—whereas Luther unhappily made that the foundation of a permanent dissension among the Evangelical brethren.—What blindness of understanding, what obstinacy of temper, what uncharitableness of judgment; yet, in the same man, what integrity of principle, what reverence for the Scriptures, what sensibility of conscience!—In one word, what an assemblage have we here of contradictory motives and qualities, at once contributing to influence and direct the conduct of this extraordinary character †!!

Luther was so much pleased with the little treatise of the fourteen Suabian ministers, that he procured a translation of it into German; and also wrote a preface to it, by which he gave great offence to the Swiss divines. He calls the tenets of the

* Lavater in Scult. 255. Hospin. 63.

† Pages 200, 201, and 226.

Sacramentarians, novel dreams; and ridicules them for having had recourse, in the space of only one year, to six different expositions of the concise expression, 'This is my body*.' CENT. XVI.

In the year 1526, the mind of Luther appears to have been excessively agitated by the Sacramentarian controversy. "I am challenged," says he, "by Ecolampadius; and I meditate an answer, if I had but leisure. It grieves me to the heart to see so great a man ensnared by frivolous arguments. May God have mercy on him!" A. D. 1526.

Again: "This Sacramentarian pestilence makes havock, and acquires strength in its progress. Pray for me, I beseech you, for I am cold and torpid. A most unaccountable lassitude, if not Satan himself, possesses me, so that I am able to do very little. Our ingratitude, or perhaps some other sin, is the cause of the Divine displeasure: certainly our notorious contempt of the word of God will account for the present penal delusion, or even a greater. I was but too true a prophet, when I predicted that something of this kind would happen†."

To another friend he writes thus:

"If I had not known, from experience, that God in his anger did suffer men to be carried away with delusions, I could not have believed that so many and so great men would have been seduced by such trifling and childish reasonings, to support this pestilential, this sacrilegious heresy.—I ask what argument is there in this; 'Christ is at the right hand of the Father, therefore he is not in the Sacrament.' Again, 'The flesh profiteth nothing, therefore the body of Christ is not in the Sacrament.' Yet these are their best arguments. Surely it is madness to be moved by such levities, in opposition to the simple indisputable word of Christ, 'This is my body!'‡"

* Hospin. 65.

† To Hausman, 319, 320. ‡ To Stifel. Id.

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In a like strain he addresses a faithful minister at Augsburg:

"Grace and peace. May Christ preserve you! Our ingratitude and contempt of the divine word is the cause why God has permitted Satan to rage in this manner. I have often foretold that our ingratitude would be punished with wars and divisions among ourselves. Do you be firm, and keep together your little flock. I am all on fire to profess openly for once my faith on the Sacrament, and to expose the tenets of our adversaries to derision IN A FEW WORDS; for they will not attend to an elaborate argument. I would have published my sentiments long ago, if I had had leisure, and Satan had not thrown impediments in my way *."

With these views and impressions, Luther preached and published at Wittemberg a sermon on the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. The object of his discourse was,—to avoid all prolix and intricate argumentation, and to state briefly to the people his own sentiments on the Eucharist, and the Scriptural proofs of them; which he conceived to be so clear and convincing, as to preclude all controversy or contrariety of opinion.

In the former part of this address, Luther observes, that, within the last two years, there had arisen six, if not seven dissentient sects; all of which however agreed in this common sentiment, that the body and blood of Christ was not present in the Sacrament. "The great cause, the very fountain of their error," he said, "was this; they did not strictly adhere to the words of Christ. In these, there was no ambiguity whatever; but men gave way to their own roving imaginations; and supposed, that in believing the presence of Christ in the bread and wine, their adversaries conceived the body of Christ to be extended in every direction throughout

* To Dr. Frosch, 319, 320.

the whole world, in order that every person living might take and eat of the same individual body. Factious spirits," he said, "always acted in this way. They first formed to themselves an opinion which was purely imaginary; and then they tortured Scripture to support that opinion. CENT. XVI.

"The true believer," continues Luther, "asks himself this question: What is it to me how Christ becomes present in the Sacrament? My business is, to believe Him who cannot lie. The words are quite clear; a child may understand them. There is not the slightest ambiguity in such words as, To take bread, To give thanks, To break bread, To give bread, To command, To eat, To drink, This is my body.—What incredible and unceasing pains have been taken to cast an obscurity over these luminous and perspicuous terms, and to make them signify just what every one has fancied in his dreams!"

"But it is absurd to suppose the body of Christ to be in more than a hundred thousand places at once.——

"This is not more absurd than the diffusion of the soul through every part of the body. Touch any part of the body with the point of a needle, and the whole man, the whole soul is sensible of the injury. If then the soul be equally in every part of the body, and you can give no reason for it, why may not Christ be every where, and every where equally in the Sacrament? Tell me, if you can, why a grain of wheat produces so many grains of the same species: or why a single eye can fix itself at once on a thousand objects, or a thousand eyes can be fixed all at once on a single minute object.

"Take another example: What a feeble, poor, miserable, vanishing thing is the voice of a man! yet what wonders it can perform—how it penetrates the hearts of multitudes of men! and yet not so as that each person acquires merely a portion of it, but rather, as if every individual ear became possessed

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of the whole. If this were not a matter of experience, there would not be a greater miracle in the whole world. If then the corporeal voice of a man can effect such wonders, why may not the glorified body of Christ be much more powerful and efficacious in its operations?

"Further; when the Gospel is preached through the exertion of the human voice, does not every true believer, by the instrumentality of the Word, become actually possessed of Christ in his heart? Not that Christ sits in the heart, as a man sits upon a chair, but rather as he sitteth at the right hand of the Father. How this is, no man can tell; yet the Christian knows, by experience, that Christ is present in his heart. Again, every individual heart possesses the whole of Christ; and yet a thousand hearts in the aggregate possess no more than one Christ. The Sacrament is not a greater miracle than this.

"But it is also said, that there is no USE in the actual presence of the body of Christ.——

"You may as well say, there is no use in Christ's being born of a Virgin; there is no necessity that Christ should be a Divine Person; there is no necessity that God should send his Son from heaven to undergo a cruel and ignominious death. God is omnipotent: Sin, death, and Satan, are all in his hand; and He, no doubt, could have devised a different method of justifying sinners;—He had only to speak the word.

"The answer," said Luther, "to all such speculations, is this: If God, in his revelation, has described any thing to be necessary, let all created beings submit in silence. Christ uses plain words, 'Take, eat, this is my body;'—whatever Christ says, I am bound to believe, and without wavering."

He then proceeds to ridicule the various interpretations which had been given of the words, 'This is my body.' "One, namely Carolstadt,

says, the word THIS does not mean the bread; and therefore he understands the expression in this way, Take, eat, for THIS is my body,—that is, he supposes the Saviour, at the time of speaking, to point towards his own person. Another, for example, Zuingle, changes the plain meaning of the verb IS, and, with Ovid's art of metamorphosing, interprets it by the word SIGNIFY. Then, in the third place, Ecolampadius insists on a still different mode of understanding these few words, 'This is my body:' according to him, the words MY BODY signify the figure or the representation of my body. CENT. XVI.

"Let us lay aside," said Luther, "all such contemptible reasoning; let us simply adhere to the express declaration of Scripture, and believe that the body and blood of Christ are present in the bread and wine. Not because Christ is present no where else with his body and blood; since he, together with his body and blood, exists most perfectly and completely in the souls of true believers; but because it has pleased him to assure us where and how we may apprehend him, and become actually partakers of himself.

"The great USE of the Sacrament," says our author in the second part of his discourse, "is, that the FAITHFUL COMMUNICANT may not only believe that the body and blood of Christ are there present, but that Christ himself is thereby given to him AS A FREE GIFT. He is therefore to preserve a lively attention to the injunction, 'Take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you;' for these are the very words which give strength to his faith. There are two positions in the Sacrament, both of which are the objects of the true Christian's faith. The first is, the real presence of the body and blood of Christ; and this the Papists profess that they believe;—the second is, that the body and blood of Christ are freely bestowed upon us, without any merits of our own; which the Papists do not believe.

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Now our adversaries, the Sacramentarians, place all the virtue of the Eucharist in a mere commemoration of the death of Christ; and they contend that the bread and wine are no more than symbols by which we make it plain to others that we are Christians: Whereas our doctrine is, that, in receiving the bread and wine, our Lord freely bestows his body and blood, and that we appropriate these to ourselves, and become actually possessed of them for the remission of our sins. Thus Christ becomes ours; and poor miserable sinners are hereby delivered from the dread of death and hell, and become children of God, and heirs of a heavenly kingdom. And it is for these great ends and purposes that we come to the Lord's Table *."

The explanations of Brentius, who was the representative of the fourteen Suabian divines, could not be materially different from those of the preceding discourse, because Luther expresses the most unqualified approbation of that performance. Brentius observes, that the presence of Christ is effected in the Sacrament, through the power and efficacy of the WORD; by which power and efficacy,—to use the very expression of Augustine,—the element of bread becomes A SACRAMENT, and the WORD itself acquires a VISIBILITY; that is to say, Just as Christ is present in his Word, in the same manner he is rendered present, and is offered to us in his Sacraments. And again; In the very same manner by which Christ gives us his body in the Eucharist, he presents us with all his Gospel, through which not only his body and blood become present, but the whole power of God, the whole Godhead itself, together with all the Divine excellencies. Surely no man can be so impious, as to deny, that by faith we may eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus Christ. St. John says, 'My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed;' meaning that these

* De Euchar. VII. 335.

things are so to the faithful. Now if the faithful do eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ, that flesh and blood must be present; for if they were not present, they could not be eaten nor drunken. The author goes on thus; "The bread of the Sacrament, as far as it is ordinary bread, we handle, break, eat, and grind with our teeth; but the body of Christ we receive through the power of these words, 'THIS IS MY BODY:' so that,—as it hath been well observed,—'what we eat enters the stomach, what we believe enters the mind.' Nevertheless it must be remembered, that though it is by faith that we eat the body of Christ, and drink his blood, this does not deprive the bread of the presence of Christ: or, in other words, though it be true that we SPIRITUALLY eat the body of Christ, yet we are not on that account to deny that we become partakers of that body in receiving the bread of the Sacrament *."

Let us now turn for a few moments to Ecolampadius himself, who, with a pious and Christian view to peace and union, drew up what he calls his confession on this subject.

"I have no hesitation," says he, "to own that the body of Christ is present with the bread, in the same manner in which it is present with the WORD itself, by which the bread becomes a Sacrament, and the Word becomes visible." And again: "Those express themselves well, and in a truly religious way, who say that they come to the Lord's Supper, even to eat the body of Christ. Also, Those talk profanely and contemptuously, who say that they obtain nothing there except bread and a sign of their Christianity: for such persons do hereby demonstrate their infidelity. A believer considers himself as treated like a traitor, if he is represented as having eaten the Sacrament only, and not the thing itself, which the Sacrament implies; although it be true

* Hosp. 59, 60.

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that he receives the former with the mouth, and the latter with the mind by faith."

This is a very material part of the confession of Ecolampadius, who concludes with observing, that he did not see how he could depart from it, even so much as the breadth of his finger *.

The history of the controversy of the Sacramentarians is prolix and voluminous; and in our days by no means worth the time and trouble of a diligent perusal. My object is, to select and condense just so much of it as will teach us lessons of caution and moderation, at the same time that it may gratify an innocent and laudable curiosity. For these were but the BEGINNINGS of that strife and contention, which continued for a long time afterwards to afflict and divide the Protestants, and obstruct the progress of Christian truth. The churches but recently reformed were torn to pieces between Luther and Zuingle. "Some characters," says the pious Scultetus, "deserted JERUSALEM, and went back again to BABYLON: others waited in suspense for the result of the disputations of the leaders in theology: good men grieved; and bad men laughed; while the Papists, throughout Italy, France, and Germany, raged with fire and sword and cruel edicts against those who, because the Scripture affirms the body of Christ to be in heaven, denied the existence of it in the bread of the Sacrament."

Yet after all, upon a review of the evidence now before us, a dispassionate student of this controversy will probably be disposed to say,—How easily, with the assistance of a little mutual candour and moderation and Christian forbearance, might the whole dispute in this stage of the contention have been settled, or at least suspended, and complete concord restored among the Evangelical brethren! For though, on the one hand, the Lutherans had certainly been too much inclined to maintain the

* Ep. Zuing. and Ecolamp. III. 129.

corporeal presence and corporeal manducation of the body of Christ in the gross sense of those terms; and, on the other hand, the Zuinglians had on some occasions justly rendered themselves suspected of an intention to deprive the Sacrament of all its spirituality, and to reduce the ordinance to a mere commemoration of the person of Christ, it does not however appear, that any such striking and specific difference of sentiment between the Saxon and the Swiss divines had hitherto been insisted on, as should have made it necessary for either of the parties to require from the other a distinct and humiliating retractation, much less to persevere in an unchristian hostility. In fact, these learned and excellent men, on both sides, seem to have been ignorant at first of the true state of the question, and also of the sentiments of each other. Then, during the heat and violence of their opposition, molehills became mountains: novel fancies arose concerning the Sacrament, which had never been thought of in the commencement of the dissensions, and which were invented purely to support arguments that had been once incautiously advanced; and these for a long time afterwards afforded materials for vain and unedifying disputation. CENT. XVI.

The very learned and zealous reformer Martin Bucer, who had adopted in general the opinions of Luther, and had had several conferences with him in 1521, was inclined, in the Sacramentarian contest, to take part with the Helvetian divines: he displayed, however, great moderation in stating his own sentiments, and was one of those who sincerely laboured to compose the dissensions among the Evangelical ministers, both by his candid construction of the declarations of the Lutherans, and also by his kind and rational exhortations to Christian fellowship. He informs us, that he considered Brentius as well qualified, by his superior judgment and learning, to influence the good clergy of his

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neighbourhood; and that with this very view he had by letter entreated him to reflect on the mischievous effects which this contention would produce on weaker minds, particularly if faithful ministers of Christ were to be wantonly traduced and reviled for their difference of sentiment in non-essentials. In this same letter he put Brentius in mind, that it was absolutely impossible for him and his friends, consistently with piety, to pull to pieces such a character as that of Ecolampadius, who had deserved so well of them, and of the glorious Gospel of Christ. Bucer then subjoined a very simple account of that idea of the Sacrament which he said was professed by himself, and also by his clerical brethren at Strasburg. "Our belief," says he, "is this, That according to the doctrine of St. Paul, as often as we eat the bread and drink the wine of the Sacrament, we show the Lord's death till he come; that is, that we consider, confess, and declare, that Christ offered to his Father on the cross his body and blood for our redemption; and doing this with a true faith, we know that our souls are really fed, refreshed, and strengthened, by the flesh and the blood of Christ." - - - Notwithstanding the veneration in which Zuingle was justly held by the reformed churches, as they are called on the Continent, I do not remember so neat, so concise, so unexceptionable, and, on the whole, so truly a Scriptural account of the nature of the Eucharist, in all the voluminous writings of that learned and excellent reformer*.

The name of Zuingle is transmitted to posterity with the highest encomiums on his candour and moderation. Not to deny the just foundation of this praise, there are however two circumstances which have, I think, contributed to make the historians and memorialists more liberal in bestowing it. 1. The excessive and ungovernable asperity of

* Scultet. xxvi. 51. Hospin. 66.

Luther, of which his enemies always take advantage, and his friends are always ashamed, never appeared more conspicuous than in the Sacramentarian controversy; and it could not fail to prove serviceable, though indirectly and by way of contrast only, to the reputation of Zuingle. 2. The language of Zuingle is infinitely, I had almost said, nearer, than that of Luther, to the language of a person educated in modern times,—of one, for example, who has learnt how to CUT DEEP, and yet to shelter himself under polite terms and respectful acknowledgments. Luther is often abusive, but never means more than he says,—often a great deal less. He frequently calls a man a fool or an ass in general, when he only intends to charge him with inconclusive reasoning, in some one instance at that time under consideration. Zuingle understands the art of pulling to pieces much better than Luther; and, I observe, he is never so much in earnest for that purpose, as when he has first artfully prepared the mind to give credit to his accusations, by praising most liberally the conduct of his adversary, in points where it was in vain for him to withhold his approbation. CENT. XVI.

We have already observed with how little of a true spirit of conciliation Zuingle, in his letter to Theobald Bilicanus *, criticised the publication of the Suabian divines. He afterwards addressed Luther himself on the same subject, to this effect: "We are sincerely concerned that you should commend this performance of the Suabian ministers. As a precedent, it is bad. In this way, the doctrine of Christ must be subjected, not to one tyrannical pontiff, but to myriads of little tyrants. Brentius has picked up, out of the streets, a number of petty bishops, and formed a synod of them: then, without any other support, he has condemned, as erroneous, the sentiments of Ecolampadius respecting the opinions of the Fathers on a certain

* See pages 402, 3.

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point. Now Ecolampadius was his preceptor; and, moreover, Brentius has neither sufficient learning nor sufficient experience to enter into the spirit of those ancient writers. Surely, my Luther, this is setting an imprudent and a most mischievous example. Every crazy brain will be producing a tumult in the Church, and exclaiming, This is error! This is heresy! We are grieved to find you commend this book, because we feel sensibly for your reputation, which cannot but suffer by your thus praising a composition that is empty and contemptible in every point of view. If one looks into it for eloquence, one finds nothing but rude and hasty expressions, without any solidity or consistence; at the same time there appears such a visible confusion and anxiety about words and sentences, that there seems to have been some danger lest the author's store of language should have been exhausted before his book was finished. Then, as to the arguments, nothing can be more feeble; and as to acuteness, a duller production was never seen: and, on the whole, it is so ill put together, and so little adapted to convince, that one is at a loss to conceive what it was that induced the author to try his strength on such a subject. For if his object was illustration, do not you see that every point he undertakes to handle, becomes, under his treatment, more obscure than it was before *?"

Plenty of passages of a similar stamp might be produced from the writings of Zuingle; but this is laid before the reader merely to show that there were other very excellent and eminent Christians as well as Luther, who, when unhappily heated by controversy, could make use, if not of as hard words, yet of quite as contemptuous and provoking a strain of expression as any which can be found in his most exceptionable and acrimonious writings.

* II. Zuing. Exeg. 327. b.

—These things are recorded in history as lessons of caution; not as examples for imitation *. CENT. XVI.

In the former part of the year 1527, the mind of Luther seems to have been irritated by this controversy to the very highest degree. He gave himself seriously to the work, and produced, in the month of February or March, a most elaborate treatise, in the German language, on the words, 'Take, eat, this is my body,' AGAINST THE FANATICAL SPIRITS OF THE SACRAMENTARIANS. Luther is much irritated by the Sacramental Controversy. A. D. 1527.

The words of our Lord, 'take, eat, this is my body,' he maintained, were express, and incapable of two meanings. Yet the Sacramentarians denied the presence of Christ's body and blood; and dreamt, that, in the Eucharist, the bread and wine were merely signs and symbols of the Christian profession. Moreover, they modestly accused those who differed from them in sentiment, of idolatry, and of worshipping a God that had been baked, and was made eatable, or turned into bread; and also drinkable, or turned into wine. Such was their blasphemous language!

They also accused the Lutherans of being the cause of this controversy. "But who," said he, "incited Carolstadt to begin the contest? Who compelled Zuingle and Ecolampadius to write on this subject? Have they not done what they have done voluntarily? We would gladly have been quiet, and even yet wish for quietness; but they

* I have particularly noticed this publication of the Suabian ministers by Brentius, because Hospinian, who in general is sufficiently prejudiced in favour of the Swiss divines, freely acknowledges that there was no great difference between the opinions of Ecolampadius and those contained in the Syngramma of the Suabians: and further, that Brentius, in an epistle to Martin Bucer, and also in his Exposition of Chap. vi. of John's Gospel, both which were written for the purpose of explaining more distinctly the sentiments of himself and his clerical brethren, had expressed his ideas of the Eucharist in such a manner, as to agree entirely with the confession of Ecolampadius. Hosp. 62.

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show themselves averse to peace. Indeed, in words they do exhort men to peace and harmony; but their practice proves they delight in sowing discord incessantly.

"They lay no stress on any one thing except their Sacramentarian tenet. Devoid of every Christian grace, they pretend to the sanctity of martyrs, on account of this single opinion; and further, they allow no man to be a Christian who does not agree with them in this same sentiment. 'Such a man,' they say, 'has no knowledge of the Scriptures, neither does he possess any thing of the Spirit;' —of such prodigious importance is it become at present to talk about BREAD and WINE. They would persuade one, that this was the great, the only concern of the Holy Ghost; when, in reality, it is a delusion of Satan, who, under the pretence of love and concord, is raising dissensions and mischiefs of every kind.

"The Sacramentarians," said Luther, "call loudly upon us for Scriptural proof of the real presence: that is, they bid us prove that there are in Scripture such words as 'This is my body;' whereas this, and no other, is the reading in every copy of the New Testament throughout the world. But where," continued he, "shall we find the words, 'This signifies my body,' 'This is the sign of my body?' or that the word IS means the same as the word SIGNIFIES? Yet they dare to conclude, with the utmost positiveness, that these last words are really Scriptural. Now I do affirm, that it is an invariable rule in Biblical criticism never to leave the obvious or literal meaning of the words of Scripture, unless we are authorized by the passage itself, or, at least, by an analogical argument, founded on some uncontroverted article of faith.—Such is the real state of the question; and I call God to witness, that I have not the least wish to defame Zuingle, and still much less Ecolampadius,

a man on whom God has bestowed many excellent gifts." Luther proceeds to the following effect: CENT. XVI.

"The Sacramentarians think it implies a contradiction to suppose that Christ should sit in glory at the right hand of God, and that his body should, at the same time, be present in the Eucharist. The answer is, The Holy Scriptures teach us that the right hand of God is not in any particular place circumscribed with bounds, as though there existed a golden seat or throne in some distinct apartment. Hence, the right hand of God, the arm of God, the face, the essence, the Spirit, the Word of God, are all one and the same thing; namely, God himself, who exists every where, and supports every thing by his Divine energy.—In the next place, Christ was in the world, walked about in the world, and yet the whole Deity was essentially and bodily in him. But how can these things be? How can God in Christ be entirely and essentially present in the womb of Mary, in the manger, in the temple, in the desert, in towns, in houses, in gardens, in the fields, on the cross, and in the sepulchre, and yet be in heaven in the bosom of the Father? No doubt this is a great miracle; nevertheless, if it be incontrovertibly true, according to the Catholic faith, that the Godhead itself is always really and essentially present in the person of Christ, the conclusion must be, that Christ is present every where, both in heaven and in earth.

"When Christ took our nature upon him, it is not to be so understood as though he descended from heaven as a man descends by a ladder or a rope; for before that wonderful event took place, he was present every where. God is present every where, and in every creature. Mark well, however, the distinction between Christ and any created being. Of the last it may be said, God is there, or in that being; but you cannot say that being is God. Whereas, in regard to Christ, God is not only

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present in him, as in every creature; but HE is the true God. The Godhead dwells in him bodily; God and man are one Christ.

"These things, I allow, confound all human wisdom and comprehension. They are to be apprehended by faith, through the instrumentality of the Word of God. Nevertheless, the UBIQUITY of Christ is a complete refutation of that fundamental objection of the Sacramentarians; namely, That Christ cannot be in the Sacrament and in heaven at the same time: AND THUS WE TAKE THE SWORD OUT OF THE HAND OF THE OSTENTATIOUS GIANT GOLIATH."

To help the imagination on so difficult a subject, Luther observed, that God might have many methods, which he had not condescended to lay open to us, whereby two things might be in the same place at the same time, or one thing might exist in another, without any gross corporeal sort of union, like that which the Sacramentarians supposed. The Scriptures spake of children being in the loins of their parents. Trees and fruits also existed in seeds and kernels. There was likewise positive proof that Christ came to his disciples through doors which were shut. There was not wanting, he added, an express testimony to the ubiquity of Christ. 'No man hath ascended into heaven, except he who came down from heaven, the Son of man, WHO IS IN HEAVEN;' which words plainly demonstrated, that Christ's body was present both in heaven and on earth, and, in fact, every where, at the very same moment.

Our author takes notice of another argument of his adversaries, upon which they laid great stress; namely, 'The flesh profiteth nothing.' John vi. Ecolampadius ventured to call this passage his IRON WALL. Luther replied, "I think IT IS A WALL OF MERE PAPER; or, perhaps, I may admit, the paper is a little tinged WITH AN IRON

colour. In this passage of Scripture, our adversaries take for granted that THE FLESH means the flesh of Christ: whereas I affirm, that whenever Christ speaks of his own flesh, or of his own body, he invariably adds the little word MY, or some word of the same import: for example, the several passages run thus,—'My flesh,—my body, is meat indeed.' 'Whoso eateth MY flesh.' 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man.' ---- Now, as it is not said MY flesh profiteth nothing, but only THE FLESH profiteth nothing, they will have enough to do to prove that flesh, in this verse, means the flesh of Christ. For there is a great difference between the flesh of Christ, and other flesh; and I call upon them to prove that the word FLESH means Christ's flesh, when it is said, The flesh profiteth nothing. And thus this whole argument, namely, the IRON WALL of Ecolampadius, FALLS TO THE GROUND. CENT. XVI.

Zuingle would argue, that to eat the flesh of Christ could do no good, because, 'That which is born of the flesh, is flesh.' On the contrary I maintain, that the flesh of Christ originates from the Holy Ghost, and is therefore holy in its nature, and comes under that expression of our Lord, namely, 'THAT WHICH IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT, IS SPIRIT;' which words prove that the body of Christ is not ordinary flesh, but spiritual flesh; for the Scriptures do not speak in this manner of any other person.

The manducation by the mouth is corporeal; that by the heart is spiritual, that is, by faith. But observe, when we are said to eat or drink spiritually, we do not mean that we eat or drink what is, in strictness, real spirit, or a spiritual substance; for then it would be impossible to eat and drink spiritually the flesh of Christ; because that flesh, wherever it be, and whether it exist in a corporeal or a spiritual essence, or whether it be visible or invisible, according to circumstances, is real, natural,

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corporeal flesh, and capable, whenever God pleases, of being touched, handled, seen, and heard; capable also of being born of a woman, and of dying on the cross. But it is denominated spiritual flesh, because, as aforesaid, it originated from the Holy Ghost, and because we ought to be partakers of it in a spiritual manner.

In using the Sacrament, the corporeal manducation, if unaccompanied by the spiritual, is ruinous to the communicant; because, as St. Paul says, 'he eats unworthily, and is guilty of the body of Christ.' Deeply impressed with these views of the Sacrament, Luther paraphrases our Lord's celebrated address to his disciples, John vi., in the following manner.

"Ye, my disciples, take offence at my words, but ye do not understand them. Ye are thinking of the ordinary processes of corporeal eating and digesting meat, such as is bought in the shambles. These thoughts are carnal and deadly. It is not flesh of this kind which I tell you ye must eat: ye must have spiritual, and not ordinary, flesh. My words must be taken spiritually, and as spoken of spiritual flesh. ALL my words are Spirit; and therefore the flesh, and the eating, and all the other things of which I speak, are Spirit, and are to be understood spiritually, and to be used spiritually. For it is the Spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing*."

The historian having furnished his readers with these materials, leaves it now to the pious and diligent student of the Ecclesiastical reformation, to make his own reflections on the state of the parties concerned in the Sacramental Controversy. Doubtless he will lament the bad spirit which was gaining ground at a great rate on both sides; and will also turn with disgust from the metaphysical jargon con-

* Op. Luth. VII. Hospin.

cerning substances, essences, and attributes, which began now to be introduced and much insisted on by the Lutherans, for the purpose of maintaining their doctrine of the omnipresence of the BODY of Christ. Luther probably never thought of having recourse to such abstruse and intricate speculations in religious inquiries, till, in defending his ideas of Consubstantiation or Impanation, he found himself hard pressed by his opponents. No man's natural temper was ever more averse than his to a sophistical or an unintelligible way of argumentation; yet his treatise against the Sacramentarians, which we have just reviewed, compels us to own, that, along with many excellent and beautiful reflections on the spiritual nature of the Sacrament, he certainly mixed a deal of scholastic puzzle and confusion; and that, notwithstanding what has been asserted to the contrary, he himself unquestionably, in the year 1527, taught publicly, and enforced with uncommon earnestness, the ubiquity of the person of Christ, considered as a human being*.

* Maclaine in Mosh. II. 199.

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FROM THE CONCLUSION OF THE SACRAMENTAL CONTROVERSY, TO THE PERSECUTIONS OF THE REFORMERS, AFTER THE FIRST DIET OF SPIRES.

1. STATE OF PARTIES.
2. DIET OF AUGSBURG IN 1525.
3. SUSPICIONS OF THE PROTESTANTS.
4. DIET OF SPIRES.
5. THE REFORMATION IN HESSE BY THE LANDGRAVE.
6. LUTHER'S SENTIMENTS RESPECTING WAR AND DEFENCE.—HIS LABOURS.
7. PERSECUTIONS OF THE REFORMERS.

1. STATE OF PARTIES.

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THE avowed and unequivocal support afforded to the Reformation by the new Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse, did not produce all the good effects which might have been expected from the wise and vigorous measures adopted by those illustrious princes, in the best of causes. Their example, indeed, was followed by all the most enlightened princes and states of Germany; and, in consequence, an improved union, more solid, and better cemented than ever, took place among THESE. But the rest, who, under the cautious and ambiguous conduct of Frederic the Wise, had hitherto shown themselves averse to an open rupture, so soon as they clearly perceived that the reformers designed to withdraw themselves from the Romish communion, and reject the jurisdiction of the pontiff, instantly took fire at the very idea of

such a basis of peace and concord. Some of them had stood neuter during the violence of the religious differences; and others had even joined the Lutherans in their complaints against certain abuses of the established church; but none had ever once dreamed of entirely deserting the religious system of their ancestors; and, as matters were fast advancing to a crisis, they now thought it high time to make an open declaration of their attachment to the established hierarchy, and of their zeal and readiness to promote its interests. CENT. XVI.

Thus the discordant princes of Germany arranged themselves into two distinct parties, each of which seemed resolutely determined to adhere to its peculiar tenets.

Essential difference between the Papists and the Lutherans.

But there was this essential difference between the patrons of Popery and Lutheranism. All the measures of the latter were in principle purely defensive; whereas the former meditated the complete extirpation of their adversaries. Foiled in arguments repeatedly, they seemed to have given up the contest in that way, and to have expected better success by having recourse to slander. The late Rustic war in Germany had afforded them a pretext for this purpose. They represented the Lutherans as bad subjects in general, and as the prime cause of that late rebellion, and of the bloodshed.—Moreover, though the rebels had been severely handled at Mulhausen*, yet fresh commotions were apprehended from the operation of the licentious doctrines of Munzer; therefore the Electors of Mayence and Brandenburg, with the Duke Henry of Brunswic and his uncle Eric, had had a conference at Dessau; where they made no secret of declaring, that the only radical cure of the evil would be to free the nation from the Lutheran heresy, and from those who protected it. This interview of the enemies of the Reformation gave

* See page 224.

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rise to much suspicion and anxiety in the mind of the Landgrave of Hesse, especially as, with a view to the distracted state of the country, he had recently requested a friendly meeting with his father-in-law, the Duke George, and had received a surly answer, "That before any thing could be done to the purpose, all the late innovations in religion must be effectually done away."

Apprehensions of the Lutherans.

These proceedings had so little ambiguity in them, that the Lutherans, about this time, began to deliberate seriously how they might best evade the blow with which they were threatened by a powerful and bigoted confederacy. They retorted the accusation of having been the cause of the rebellion of the peasants, and justly ascribed those sad events to the cruel persecuting spirit of the nobles and dignitaries of the church. Various conventions of the princes were held in different places. At Salfeld, in particular, they came to this resolution, "That it became them, as Christian princes, to do every thing to promote the glory of God, and to conform their practice to the revealed word. That, by this word, the true doctrine of Justification, through the mercy of God by faith in Jesus Christ, was now once more revived; and that, for this great benefit, eternal thanks was due to Almighty God." The proxies transmitted their resolution to the Duke George, and at the same time animadverted severely on what had passed at the late assembly at Dessau *.

2. Diet of Augsburg in 1525.

The preceding apprehensions increased.

Meanwhile, mandatory letters from Charles V. to his brother and representative, Ferdinand, dated Toledo, May 24, 1525, calling for a diet of the empire, increased both the discontent and the alarm of all those German princes who favoured the Reformation. The letters breathed nothing but

* Arch. Weim. p. 42. Add. 1.

the execution of the edict of Worms, and destruction to the Lutherans. He directed the diet to be held at Augsburg, on the next Michaelmas day; and privately, in a milder tone, requested the Elector of Saxony to be present. But this prince, at the instance of the Landgrave, resolved upon a previous measure, admirably calculated to defeat the violent designs of the papal party. This measure consisted in forming a SPEEDY ASSOCIATION with all the moderate and well-disposed states of the empire; such as, the Elector Palatine, the Elector of Treves, the margraves of Brandenburg, the dukes of Luneburg, Pomerania, and Mecklenburg, the princes of Anhalt, the imperial cities of Nuremberg, Strasburg, Augsburg, and of Ulm and Magdeburg; the object of which association should be, to concur in representing to Ferdinand the imminent danger there was at this time of exciting fresh and more formidable riots and seditions, by any attempts to execute the edict of Worms; and how abundantly more wise and safe it would be, at the present moment, to come to some distinct determination and settlement respecting the religious differences. CENT. XVI.

The principal states of the empire agreed in the same sentiments; and even Ferdinand himself at length confessed the necessity of adopting pacific measures in the concern of religion; and allowed the princes to send to the diet such of their theologians as THEY judged best qualified, by their knowledge and discretion, to prove useful advisers in the ensuing deliberations *.

Accordingly, the Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave instructed their deputies to represent to the diet, That their masters complained heavily of the harsh terms in which the imperial mandate for calling the diet was expressed:—that, in fact, the late rebellion of the peasants, which the princes had

Melancthon's defence of Protestantism.

* Arch. Weim. p. 42. Add. 1.

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suppressed at the hazard of their lives, was to be imputed to such ill-timed and provoking severities;—that divine truth could not be extinguished in the minds of men by force;—that much greater evils than any which had yet happened would be the infallible consequence of the attempt, besides the despite done to the word of God; that those decrees of Nuremberg, which respected the reformation of religion, ought to be observed; and that, in a matter where the salvation of men's souls was concerned, the utmost care should be taken not to harass tender consciences, by increasing, instead of diminishing, the present evils;—and, lastly, the deputies were ordered to oppose the execution of the edict of Worms with all their might.

Further: the elector of Saxony, well aware under how much odium he laboured from the papal ecclesiastics, on account of the reformation in religion which he had authorized at Wittemberg, directed his theologians to prepare in writing, ready for the diet, a brief but comprehensive answer to the principal objections of the opposite party: and such a memoir is found among the Archives of Weimar, neatly executed in the German language by the pen of Melancthon.

What follows is a specimen of the author's manner of treating the subject. The question is, Whether we are guilty of the sin of schism, in preaching certain doctrines, and abolishing certain usages, not only without the leave of the bishops, but in direct opposition to their injunctions? For, as they can say nothing against our doctrine, they have no way left to condemn us, but by objecting to our want of authority from the ecclesiastical rulers.

They argue, 1. The bishops, and no one else, possess any jurisdiction in the church.

2. They urge the infallibility of the church;—and therefore it is not possible there should have

existed, for so many ages, the errors and idolatries which we have abrogated. CENT. XVI.

3. They put us in mind, that to obey is better than sacrifice;—we ought therefore to have been obedient to our superiors; Also,

4. To have shown a charitable regard for tender consciences. And,

5. Not to have raised civil wars by licentious innovations.

Melancthon rests the defence of the reformers upon the following facts and principles:

1. Every minister of the word of God is bound, by the express precept of Christ*, to preach the leading doctrine of the Gospel, namely, justification by faith in Christ Jesus, and not by the merit of human performances. Whereas, nothing is more certain than that men have been drawn from the cross of Christ, to trust in their own works, and in a variety of superstitious vanities.

2. God has forbidden, under the most heavy punishment, every species of idolatry and false worship: and of this class are the sacrifice of the mass, masses for the dead, invocations of the saints, and such like; which things, though manifest blasphemies, it is notorious, have been taught in the church of Rome, and represented as sharing, in their efficacy to salvation, with the merits of our Redeemer himself.

3. The pope and bishops neglect their duty; exercise an usurped authority even over emperors and princes; and, under the pretence of serving Christ, apply the possessions of the church to the service of their tyrannical purposes.

On these grounds the author argues, That the clergy, from the very nature of their vocation, have an unquestionable authority to preach the truths of the Gospel; and, moreover, are called on the louder

* Matt. x. 32.

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to do this when the bishops are plunged in ignorance and luxury, and when they answer the admonitions and remonstrances of the reformers only by anathemas and persecutions.

That the pope, the cardinals, and the clergy of Rome, did not constitute the Church of Christ, though there did exist among them some who were real members of that church, and opposed the reigning errors. That the true church consisted of the faithful, and of none else, who had the word of God, and by it were sanctified and cleansed *. That St. Paul had predicted there would come Antichrist, sitting in the temple of God: and, that the reformers were not guilty of schism, either because they had convicted Antichrist of his errors, or because they had made alterations in some external ordinances. That the unity of the church did not consist in such things; and that whoever maintained that it did, ought in every way to be most strenuously opposed.

That to the charge of disobedience, the answer was easy: The pope and his bishops had exacted an unlawful obedience; that nothing short of giving up the word of God would content them; and that by their excommunications, and other persecutions of the reformed clergy, THEY THEMSELVES had at length stirred up the late rebellion in Germany.

Lastly, the author confirms his reasoning by quoting precepts of Christ himself, and by producing pertinent examples from the history, both of the Christian and the Jewish church. "The great doctrinal point," says he, in conclusion, "is that of Faith in the merits of Christ, independently of human works, as the ground of acceptance before God. Rather than give up this, we must suffer persecution, and every species of disturbance."

In the same memoir, Melancthon touches upon another question; namely, Whether the princes had

* Eph. v. 26.

done right in authorizing the reformations which had been made in their colleges and monasteries, contrary to the edicts of the emperor and the pope? CENT. XVI.

"The whole," says our author, "turns upon this single consideration, Whether the novel doctrines, as they are called, be or be not true? If true, the princes ought assuredly to protect them. The princes are no more under obligation to obey the higher powers in their tyrannical mandates, than Jonathan was to kill David, or Obadiah the prophets *."

Such were the concise arguments by which the first reformers defended themselves from the charge of heresy and schism.

Mild proceedings of the papal partisans.

It is to the exertions of these excellent men, conducted with so much spirit, wisdom, and moderation, that we are to ascribe the mild proceedings of the papal partisans at the diet of Augsburg.—In fact, that assembly did not meet till the month of November, and from the advanced state of the season, and other causes, was but thinly attended. The diet was prorogued till the third of May of the next year, to be then held at Spires; and in the mean time, they entreated the emperor to take measures for calling a council, and to favour them with his presence in Germany; but so far from directing the edict of Worms to be enforced, they satisfied themselves with repeating the evasive decree of Nuremberg, which, in general, enjoined the clergy to introduce no novel doctrines, but to preach the pure Gospel as it had been understood always by the great body of Christians, to consult for peace and harmony, and do all to the glory of God. It does not appear that Ferdinand discovered any reluctance to subscribe the terms of the RECESS. The most violent and the most inveterate adversaries of Luther could not but see the danger and the folly of all attempts, under the present circumstances,

Diet to be held at Spires, A. D. 1526.

* 1 Kings, xviii. 4.

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either to banish, or take away the life of a man who was so much admired and beloved by his countrymen; and to whose extraordinary discernment, industry, and courage, not only Germany, but also many other parts of Europe, were under the greatest obligations.

3. Suspicions of the Protestants.

Suspicions of the Protestants.

This appearance, however, of lenity and moderation was deceitful, being founded not in any solid principles of justice or religion, but merely in the temporary fear of tumult and sedition.—Even during the sittings of the late diet, the ecclesiastical princes had shown themselves much elevated with the recent victories over the rebellious peasants, and, in consequence, more disposed to violent and sanguinary measures. Thus the present calm was considered, by the more judicious and thinking Protestants, only as a prelude to a tempest, shortly to be raised by all the great powers of the established hierarchy, for the purpose of crushing effectually, not only the Saxon Reformer, and his petty adherents at Wittemberg, but every German prince and State, whether civil or ecclesiastical, which had dared to oppose or dissent from the communion of the Roman church *.

Additional reasons for suspicion.

Moreover, there were other reasons, besides those that have been mentioned, which would naturally fill the minds of the Protestants with disquieting suspicions and apprehensions. So embittered was the court of Rome against what they called the Lutheran heresy, that in every treaty which the pope had of late concluded with foreign powers, the absolute destruction and extirpation of all Lutherans was a specific article.—For example, the ninth article of the treaty made by Clement VII. with the emperor, after the battle of Pavia and the capture of Francis I. runs thus: "Because religion, much more

Clement VII's treaty with Charles V.

* Comm. de Luth. II. XV. 4.

than any temporal concern, is near the heart of the Roman pontiff, and because the good faith of his holiness has been called in question, the emperor, the king of England, and the archduke Ferdinand, engage to take up arms with all their might against all disturbers of the Catholic faith, and against all persons who shall revile or injure the pontiff; and further, the aforesaid princes take upon themselves to punish all such offenders against his holiness, in the same manner as if the offences had been committed against their own persons *."

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Clement VII's treaty with Francis I.

In the autumn of the very same year, this precious pontiff, whose thoughts, it seems, were so deeply and so entirely exercised concerning the advancement and protection of pure religion, deserted Charles V., and made a treaty with England and France, the primary object of which was declared to be, that the contracting parties should effectually withstand the brutal ferocity of the Turks, and also suppress that most pestilential heresy of the Lutherans; for that there was as much danger from the latter evil as from the former, the said heresy having secretly spread itself to a great extent, and done much mischief to the Christian faith †.

Treaty of Madrid.

In the famous treaty of peace, called the Treaty of Madrid, by which Francis I. recovered his liberty, it is expressly stated, that the emperor and the king are induced to make peace, that they may be able to extirpate all the enemies of the Christian religion, and especially the heresies of the Lutheran sect. The pope, they say, had often admonished and much solicited them to attend seriously to this important duty. It was, therefore, to satisfy his wishes that they had determined to entreat his holiness to give

* Palav. II. 13.

† Rymer XIV. Sleidan VI. 145.

Cardinal Wolsey is supposed to have persuaded Henry VIII. to adopt this measure, as at that time he was much out of humour with Charles V. who, the cardinal believed, had prevented his being chosen pope at the last vacancy.

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directions for a general council of the deputies of the kings and princes, to meet at a fixed time and place, then and there to consult on the most effectual method of carrying on the war against the Turks, and also of suppressing heresy *.

How vigilant and indefatigable was this pontiff in rousing the adversaries of religion, and endeavouring to make them active and resolute in persecuting the little flock of true Christians, wherever they could find them! Among many of his epistolary admonitions and exhortations written for this purpose, there is one even to the Parliament of Paris. He had been informed, he said, that impious heresies had begun to creep into France; and that the parliament had wisely interposed, by choosing commissioners for the detection and punishment of the offenders. He entirely approved, and by his authority confirmed, the steps they had taken: it was a common concern: the mischief was general, and was to be ascribed to the malice of Satan, and the fury of his impious agents. Not only religion, but also governments, kings, princes, nobles, all ranks and orders, were on the brink of destruction. It was a time when the common safety called for unanimous exertion. He promised that on his part no care or labour should be spared; and it was THEIR duty, he told them, to enter into the same views with their whole heart, and preserve their country from that calamitous infection, which infallibly attended the dissemination of this contagious heresy †.

Pope's letter to the Parliament of Paris.

Another source of anxiety and alarm to the Protestant confederate princes, was the steady cooperation of Charles V. with the pope's tyrannical designs. Charles, by mandate from Seville, March 1526, directed his lieutenant-general Ferdinand, and the rest of his commissioners, to admonish the

Charles v. concurs with the Pope, A. D. 1526.

* Sleidan VI. 146. Also, Recueil des Traités, tom. II.
† Ibid. 140.

members of the diet, who were about to assemble at Spires, to make no resolutions which were either contrary to the Christian faith, or to the ancient usages. He himself had already abrogated the late decree of Nuremberg, which had enjoined an examination of Luther's writings; and would shortly concert measures with his holiness, respecting a GENERAL council. The resolutions of those partial assemblies, he said, had done no good; but had rather confirmed the licentious vulgar in their errors; and that the diet would do well to regulate all their proceedings by that standard which had been settled by their own common consent. He complained, that doctrines which had been condemned were still taught, holy men were reviled, and seditions encouraged *. CENT. XVI.

This imperial mandate was intended by Charles V. for the public eye; but besides this, he caused private and secret instructions to be delivered to Henry duke of Brunswic, the general purport of which, as it soon became matter of notoriety, affected the minds of the good Protestants with much greater concern than any public document could do, because it seemed most clearly to demonstrate the extreme hostility of the emperor's disposition towards any species of reformation.—The duke was commissioned to visit several such princes of the empire as were known to be perfectly untainted with Lutheranism; for example, the archbishops of Cologne and Bremen, the bishops of Munster and Minden, the elector of Brandenburg, and several others. He was directed to show his instructions to some of them, to deliver civil messages from the emperor to others, and to make them all acquainted with how much grief his imperial highness had heard of the daily increase of the Lutheran heresy, which had already given rise to so much bloodshed, devastation, and blasphemy. The duke was to add, that the steady adherence of Secret instructions of Chas. v.

* Sleidan VI. 148.

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these princes to the ancient religion had afforded the emperor the most lively satisfaction; and that his highness intended very shortly to advise with them in person, concerning the best remedies to be used in this most destructive distemper. He was then to declare, on the emperor's part, that he should not permit any other of his concerns to interfere with this: and lastly, he was to exhort the princes to persevere in the faith, to unite themselves with all the Anti-lutherans, and, in one connected body, to resist with effect, and finally to suppress, the cunning and deceitful arts, as well as the violent and seditious outrages, of this mischievous faction.—Charles concluded his instructions emphatically with saying, "That he should not be wanting in his endeavours to promote the good cause;—that he heartily thanked those who had hitherto shown their zeal and fidelity, and he would not fail to reward their services liberally."

The precise manner in which these secret communications came to the knowledge of the Lutheran princes does not appear; but as copies of the memoir were sent to several other princes besides Henry of Brunswic, we need not wonder that its contents were soon divulged.

Effects of the instructions.

This secret memoir, there is reason to believe, contributed to produce some important consequences.—1. Distrust and animosity among the princes of the empire. In particular, the Duke of Brunswic was suspected of having calumniated the Lutheran princes, and of having endeavoured to poison the emperor's mind, by instilling a belief that the reformers made proselytes by using force; and moreover, that they were the real cause of the late Rustic rebellion. 2. An entire despair of the emperor's justice and impartiality in any future attempt to adjust the religious differences. He lent his ear to slanderous reports, and afforded the accused no opportunity of justifying themselves. 3. It proved,

that beyond all doubt, a treaty had been concluded against Christ and his sacred word. The landgrave, on the occasion of this conviction of his mind, declared solemnly, that he would rather lose his life than be forced in this manner into poverty and exile. 4. It showed the urgent and increased necessity of a counter treaty, for the purpose of confounding the machinations of all the adversaries of Christian truth and liberty of conscience. CENT. XVI.

Undoubtedly the pope and the emperor were most to be dreaded, as the great engines of ecclesiastical tyranny and persecution; nevertheless, it was now become sufficiently clear, that there existed also within the German empire, many powerful agents, who were completely disposed to concur with those wicked despots in their destructive and sanguinary designs against the infant reformation *.

Secret treaty against the Protestants.

For those very purposes, a secret treaty against the elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse was discovered to have been made at Mayence, under the auspices and management of the duke George. Luther, whose vigilance and industry were unexampled, both acquired a knowledge of this conspiracy, and wrote a little treatise for the purpose of exposing the authors of it. It was however thought better to suppress the work; and at present there remain only some fragments of it in the German edition of Luther's Works †.

Luther alludes to the secret treaty.

In a letter to Spalatinus, he alludes to these things in the following manner: "You can scarcely believe what mischief Satan is plotting at this moment, through the medium of the bishops, with the duke George at their head. Shortly, in a little book, which is at this very time in the press, I purpose to give you a specimen of his iniquitous proceedings. If the Lord do not prevent the accomplishment of the designs of these men, you will have to say, that the late rebellion and slaughter of

* See page 434. † Tom. III. 520.

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the rustics was but the prelude to the universal destruction of Germany. I therefore seriously beseech you, join your prayers with me to the Father of mercies, that he may be pleased to confound the wild and insidious devices of these men; especially of the duke George,—a deplorably lost character, I do fear. Let us beseech God, either to change his heart, or to remove him from among us: otherwise he will not only continue to rage like a wild beast, but, through the instigation of the prelates, will show himself a perfect Satan. It so torments the man that Luther is not yet put to death, he can neither sleep nor wake; insomuch that there may be some reason to fear, he will be worn out by the excessive anxiety of his mind on this very account. —Gracious God! what a load has our good Prince to sustain! not merely as elector of Saxony, and an avowed friend of the reformers amidst numerous hostile princes, but also on account of the wicked machinations of some of his own familiars and intimates, persons of rank and consequence. I have abundance to tell you, concerning plots and evil counsels; but I dare not commit them to writing*."

Real state of the Reformation.

The real state of the Reformation in Germany may be collected from such documents as these, infinitely better than from many chapters, filled with the imaginations and refinements of the most acute politicians. The curious student of ecclesiastical history will now see what just cause the Protestant princes, especially John the Constant, elector of Saxony, and Philip the landgrave of Hesse, had for apprehending the most imminent danger to their dignity and property, and even their lives, from the fury and barbarity of papal superstition; and how necessary it was become to form a well-connected, defensive alliance, which might prove some protec-

* Ep. II. 313. b. This, as far as I know, has never been before translated from the Latin.

tion and security against the impending storm. The diet of Spires was at hand; and if the anti-papal princes should have met there without previous communication of sentiment, confusion, reserve, and imbecility, must have been the consequence, instead of unanimity, courage, and strength. No time was therefore to be lost; the present moment seemed critical in the highest degree. Actuated by such views and principles, those resolute and spirited Protestants, the elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse, met at Torgau, and there agreed upon a treaty of mutual defence, in opposition to the tyranny of the ecclesiastics. Their next step was to invite others to join in the alliance; and in a few weeks afterwards, at Magdeburg, they met together again, and again subscribed the same treaty, with the addition of a considerable number of princes, who followed their example. CENT. XVI.

The Magdeburg treaty, as it is called, does honour to the cause of the Gospel, is worthy of the courageous Christian characters who joined in it, and, as it seems to have been the foundation of the famous league which was afterwards formed at Smalcald, we shall give the substance of it here. Treaty of Magdeburg.

The federalists begin with praising God for his extraordinary providence, his grace, and his unspeakable mercy, in having bestowed upon them his Sacred word, which is the only true comfort, the real food of the soul, and the greatest treasure in the world. They then proceed to relate the numerous and powerful machinations with which to the present moment they have been disturbed, especially by the clergy and their adherents, whose object it was to deprive the people of the use of the Holy Scriptures, and of those comforts which the Scriptures afford to the heart and conscience.—They express a hope that God will continue to them this great blessing of the Bible. They were ready to have repaired to the late diet at Augsburg, there to

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treat concerning religion and harmony, but were prevented by the advanced season of the year. They had now the same intentions in regard to the diet of Spires. They were convinced, they said, by the information which they received from all quarters, as also by the various meetings and discussions which had recently taken place, that factions were forming, leagues and treaties entered into, and money collected; and all this, in the intention of maintaining by force the old abuses, of extinguishing the truths of Divine revelation, and of waging war against those princes and rulers who felt themselves bound in duty and conscience to profess and protect the Gospel in their dominions, and who injured no person living, nor committed any acts of violence whatever.——Impelled therefore by their own consciences and a sense of their duty to God, it was for the reasons above mentioned, that, without meaning to offend any one, they had mutually agreed upon a plan of pure defence against the war and violence with which they appeared to be threatened; and they hereby engaged to unite and exert every power they possessed against all those, who, under any pretence whatever, should attack them on account of their religion *.

4. Diet of Spires.

Diet of Spires. A. D. 1526.

The diet did not assemble at Spires till near the end of June, 1526, but was unusually well attended. All the electors, except one, namely, that of Brandenburg, were present.

The elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse, during the deliberations of the members, appear to have preserved a steady attention to the very prudent project which they had recently formed; judging, it would seem, that they should serve the Lutheran cause more effectually by strengthening

* Seck. II. 44. Add. II.

their TREATY OF DEFENCE, than by long arguments and debates on points of religion, before an assembly which contained so many bigoted ecclesiastics and selfish politicians. Accordingly, they took occasion to address the deputies of Strasburg, Nuremberg, and Augsburg, on the subject of mutual defence. They were convinced, they said, of their love of the Gospel; and there could be no doubt of the machinations of the prelates and other agents of the pope at the present time: Ought not therefore an association or an alliance to be formed on this principle, namely, that if any one should be brought into difficulty or danger on account of religion, the federalists should support one another? They added, that as they had a good opinion of the cities of Frankfort and Ulm, it might be proper to ask them also to join in the confederacy. To this the deputies replied, They had no express instruction on that subject, but they promised to be particularly careful in reporting the proposal to their masters. CENT. XVI.

Several of the Lutheran divines* were present at this diet, and were heard in explanation of the doctrines of the reformers; but not without much troublesome though ineffectual objection on the part of the papal princes, under the pretext of avoiding commotions. Ferdinand also made a smooth and plausible harangue to the deputies of all the States of the empire. "Himself, his brother the emperor, and the house of Austria, were bound to them by the ties of affection." He therefore warned them not to be led astray by the persuasions of certain persons; and finally exhorted them to exhibit a disposition to obey their lawful sovereign. But these mild terms, it is to be observed, were not used by Ferdinand till near the conclusion of the diet; when he had found, by experience, that neither himself, nor the imperial ministers, nor the bishops, had

* Georg. Spalatinus, and Johannes Agricola.

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been able, by their menaces, to overawe those resolute and determined Germans.

At the opening of the diet, the emperor's representative informed the members, it was the pleasure of his imperial highness, that in the first place, they should proceed to determine the best method of securing the Christian religion, and the ancient usages of the church;—then, how they should punish offenders, and compel to obedience such as forcibly resisted their injunctions; also, how they could unite their mutual and effective efforts to procure the execution of the edict of Worms, which was now of five years standing. Upon this, the diet selected a committee, composed of bishops, secular princes, and leading senators, who should propose regulations for the adjustment of the religious differences. But the emperor's representatives interposed, by saying, that it would be most to the purpose for them to read to the diet the instructions which they had received from their master; this would best ensure obedience to him, and prevent that loss of time which the committee might otherwise spend on subjects to which their authority did not extend. They then read the emperor's mandate from Seville, as given above, at page 436.

The answer of the Deputies.

Most of the deputies answered, in writing, That it had been fully proved to the pope's legate, in a former diet, that it was then absolutely impossible to execute the edict of Worms, through fear of the commotions which would arise: That now the attempt was become abundantly more difficult; because the religious disputes were daily increasing, especially about ceremonies and abuses: That the emperor, were he present, would form the same judgment.—Moreover, in regard to the promise of a general council, that promise was made by the emperor when in treaty with his holiness; but that, since the date of the emperor's letters, the pope

had changed sides, and ordered his forces to act against his imperial majesty. What prospect then could there be of a general council? Under such circumstances, it was their opinion that the emperor's leave should be asked to call a provincial Germanic council; that either delay, or an attempt to execute the edict of Worms, was unspeakably dangerous; and that therefore if his imperial majesty did not approve of the expedient of calling such a council, he should be entreated to dispense with the execution of the aforesaid edict, till a general council could be called. Such, they said, had been the plan of the last diet of Nuremberg, and that since their intended convention at Spires had been interdicted by the emperor, the expectations of many of the States had been disappointed, and the disposition to tumult and civil war much increased. That, in fact, the rebellion of the peasants might have been avoided, if attention had been paid to the representation of the grievances which the country suffered from the ecclesiastics. That in those districts where a reformation had taken place, the disturbances had been slight, and presently quieted. That they had made no changes whatever in that true and holy faith which was founded in Christ, and his eternal immutable word; neither had they rejected any ceremonies, but what were contrary to the Scriptures. Lastly, they observed emphatically, That in a state of discord, uncertainty, and anxiety, respecting their own condition, men could not be much disposed to contribute their money liberally to the assistance of others. CENT. XVI.

A distinct memorial of the deputies.

After this, the deputies, in a distinct memorial, ventured to point out certain practices, which they thought called for alteration or entire abolition. In every town, they said, the poor inhabitants were burdened with what were denominated mendicant monks. These stripped men of the comforts of life;

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and, in many cases, procured legacies and estates to be devised to them by dying persons. These things were mischievous to the last degree, and called loudly for correction. The ecclesiastics, also, ought no longer to enjoy those immunities, for the granting of which the reasons now no longer existed. Also, the number of holidays ought to be lessened; the distinction of meats abolished; and, above all, the free course of the Gospel should not be impeded *.

Such bold and prudent remonstrances as these must have given the pontifical partisans an insight into the steady character of the German reformers. In particular, the elector of Saxony most strictly enjoined his counsellors to beware of the corrupt arts of the bishops, and to stand inflexibly firm to the cause of the Gospel. It was however chiefly through the numerous suffrages of the towns and cities, and especially those of the higher Germany, that the reformers acquired so considerable an ascendant in this diet †.

The leading ecclesiastics, who, as Father Paul acutely observes ‡, had no other aim but the preservation of their own authority, maintained, that now, during the discord between the emperor and the pope, it was impossible to come to any decisive conclusions respecting the religious dissensions; and that therefore that business had better be deferred to a more favourable juncture. No doubt they conceived, that, as dignified ecclesiastics, both their authority and their revenues would be more effectually supported by the pope acting at a future time in concert with the emperor, than by the emperor alone in the present circumstances.

The members also of the select committee before mentioned differed so exceedingly among each other, and the opposition to any reformation was conducted with such prodigious heat and acrimony, that there seemed to be an end to all sober delibe-

* Sleidan, 149. † Ibid. 148. ‡ P. 34.

ration. Spalatinus's observation on what he saw at this diet is, that "Christ was extremely odious to the Pharisees." He adds, that neither the elector nor the landgrave were allowed to have their own chaplains in the churches; and that on this account these princes caused sermons to be preached in the vestibules of their hotels, where many thousands of people were collected together to hear the doctrines of the Gospel *. CENT. XVI.

Disgusted with such violent and unprincipled proceedings, and seeing no prospect of an amicable conclusion, these good princes and their adherents meditated to withdraw themselves from the diet, and return home. Ferdinand instantly took the alarm; convinced that, if the assembly should break up in their present state of animosity and exasperation, without making any decree, all Germany would be in a flame. He had moreover received recent information, that the Turks had advanced into Hungary, and also that France, England, and the pope, were in treaty against the emperor. In this critical conjuncture he wisely determined to recommend moderation and harmony to the contending parties; and at length, by using gentle and soothing language, with the assistance of the archbishop of Treves, he seems to have prevented a most mischievous rupture in the diet, and to have produced among its members a more pacific and practicable disposition. The difficulty still remained, to determine in what terms the decree, OR THE RECESS, should be expressed, so as to be sufficiently respectful to the emperor, and yet perfectly consistent with what had been proved, after long and warm altercations, to be the sentiments of a great majority of the deputies. At last, the reformers suggested the following expedient, which was consented to by the whole assembly; "That the welfare of religion, and the maintenance of the public peace, made it

Elector of Saxony and Landgrave of Hesse disgusted.

Terms of the Recess.

* Comm. de Luth. Add. III. p. 45. Maimb. II. 9.

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necessary that a general, or at least a national council, should be called, to commence within the space of a year; that the emperor should, by a solemn address, be requested to procure such a council; and that, in regard to ecclesiastical concerns and the edict of Worms, the princes and States should in the mean time, till either one or the other sort of council was called, undertake so to conduct themselves in their respective provinces, as to give to God and to the emperor a good account of their administration *."

Thus terminated, in a manner more advantageous to the Lutherans than they could have expected, the diet of Spires. The resolution of THE RECESS, it is true, was but evasive; yet such were the existing circumstances, that a truce of this sort answered all the purposes which the most zealous friends of the Reformation could desire. Their divines preached and wrote with greater confidence and less molestation; and the anti-papal dispositions increased both in strength and numbers. It was natural that those who already had rejected the Romish superstitions should proceed more vigorously, during such a season of liberty, in digesting and maturing their new systems of ecclesiastical government; and also, that several princes or States, who through timidity or danger had hitherto with reluctance continued in close communion with the establishment, should now grow cold in the cause they had long disliked, or perhaps renounce at once, if circumstances permitted them, that corrupt communion, and adopt the new model of worship and church government already made to their hands in the electorate of Saxony. And such, we are told, were the real effects of the ambiguous decree of the diet of Spires in 1526 †.

Pious behaviour of the Lutheran princes at the diet.

We have not yet mentioned how much the beauty and excellence of pure evangelical principles showed themselves at the diet of Spires, in the exterior con-

* Sleid. 150. † Laur. Mosh. 666. Helmstad. Ed.

duct of the Lutheran princes. The landgrave of Hesse, about a week before the meeting of the diet, represented to John Frederic, the son of the elector, how necessary it was, that those, who pretended to be advocates for reformation of doctrine, should themselves be careful to exhibit examples of good moral conduct in their own families. He entreated the young prince to state this matter seriously to his father; and thereby prevent the debauchery, and drinking, and other vices, which usually took place at such public seasons, among the domestics and servants of the great. "How dreadfully scandalous," said he, "and how injurious, are such practices, to the cause of the Gospel, and of the word of God! The princes ought to set their faces most earnestly against these inveterate and impious abuses; and, by so doing, they would acquire both signal advantage and honour. Nay," added he, "they must do so, unless they mean to bring on themselves the worst of evils, and even the loss of their own souls." The elector received the admonition like a good Christian, and enjoined his whole retinue to observe the most laudable regulations. And thus these good protestants and their families, who have been reviled by papal historians for breaking the Roman-catholic rules concerning fasts and meats and drinks, during their residence at Spires, were in fact adorning their profession, by temperance, soberness, and chastity*. CENT. XVI.

Whatever be our religious principles, provided only they be near our hearts, we find they infallibly direct our practice. Thus every true Roman-catholic lays immense stress on the doctrine of Transubstantiation. And agreeably to this faith, the Swiss historian Hospinian informs us, that John Faber, vicar of the bishop of Constance, was at the diet of Spires, and there, with many tears, conjured the assembly, if they did nothing else, at least to take special care that Christ himself, and of course

*. Com. de Luth. Ibid.

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all the salvation by Christ, was not taken away from them, by trampling on his body. This attempt, he said, was now in the contemplation of those men who denied the REAL CORPOREAL PRESENCE of Christ in the Sacrament. The same historian observes that the popish divines were well aware that the doctrine of the real presence is the very foundation of their religion; and that if it be once taken away, there is an end both of their dignity and of their gain *.

5. THE REFORMATION IN HESSE BY THE LANDGRAVE.

Reformation in Hesse.

THE ardent temper of Philip, the landgrave of Hesse, was a remarkable contrast to the cautious dilatory disposition of the late elector of Saxony. Unmoved by the pressing solicitations of the duke George his father-in-law, and also of his mother Anne of Mecklenburg, the landgrave, immediately upon his return from the diet of Spires, earnestly endeavoured to carry forward the Reformation which in some degree was already begun in his dominions. Melancthon, who had been consulted on this occasion, attempted to check the fervour of this prince, by a letter full of good sense, yet savouring a little of the natural timidity of the writer †. He advised him by all means, in the present critical times, to proceed by gradual advances, and never to lose sight of the grand distinction between things essential, and things in their very nature indifferent. The preachers on the side of the Reformation, he said, were often as quarrelsome as the papists themselves, if not more so on some occasions; and frequently the difference was about mere trifles. A public teacher should not only inculcate faith, but also the fear of God, and universal charity and obedience to magistrates. He dreaded a civil war, and would rather die than live at such a time. The Romish ecclesiastics instigate

* Hosp. II. 42. b. † Gerdes. II. 165.

to war: why do not the rest exhort men to gain a knowledge of the subject, and in the mean time to keep the peace? "Your highness," continued Melancthon, "I am convinced, might do a great deal with the princes, if you would exhort them to take pains to understand the several points in dispute, and endeavour to terminate the ecclesiastical contentions *." CENT. XVI.

The landgrave, not quite satisfied with the lukewarm advice of Melancthon, and anxious to have the pure Gospel of Christ taught in all the churches under his jurisdiction, appointed an ecclesiastical synod to be held at Homburg, in the month of October 1526, for the express purpose of determining the peculiar and distinguishing doctrines of the Reformation. Moreover, in this important business he was assisted by a French divine of excellent character, named Francis Lambert, who first composed a summary of pure evangelical doctrine and of the errors of the church of Rome, then published his propositions, and afterwards boldly presented himself before the synod and a great multitude of Hessians, as an advocate and defender of the system which he had submitted to the general inspection and judgment. The landgrave and his chancellor were present, and allowed perfect freedom of discussion; but as no material opposition was made to the propositions of Lambert, and as they were completely Lutheran in their purport, it may be sufficient to conclude this article with a brief account of their author. The Landgrave assisted by Francis Lambert, A. D. 1526.

"There is no doubt," says Luther to Spalatinus, "of the integrity of Lambert: we have witnesses who heard him preach, both in France and at Basil; and they all give the man a good character. He is of a noble family, but has been a Minor friar during the space of twenty years, and is now a poor persecuted exile for having been faithful to the Word of

* Lib. III. 16. Ep. Melancth.

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God. At present he is with us at Wittemberg; and though we have no want of lectures, we shall endeavour to employ him. He pleases me in all respects; and I am satisfied he is one who deserves a little help from us in his poverty: but you, who know that I live at the expense of other persons, must also know that I have not an income to support him. It might not be amiss for you to persuade the prince not to lose this good man, but in Christian charity to afford him some small assistance till he can support himself, either by his own industry, or by what he may receive from his relations *."

Another author of unquestionable veracity describes this same Frenchman to be a person who excelled in piety, genius, and learning, and who was able powerfully to convince gainsayers, and stop their mouths. During his residence at Wittemberg, he wrote comments on the Prophets, on Solomon's Song, and the Gospel of St. Luke, and dedicated them to the elector †. He seems to have agreed with Luther in all the fundamental points of religion. In his twenty-second proposition at Homburg, he thus speaks of faith and justification: "We are not justified by a mere historical faith; but by a real lively trust in God,—and this without any works of obedience even to the law of God: much less then are we justified by any works of our own contrivance. Such a faith, however, is always fruitful, and produces a willing obedience: it also makes a man free; yet not free so as to be absolved from obedience to magistrates. Neither can it possibly be, that a faithful soul should abuse true Christian liberty. The man who does abuse it, is not in possession of true Christian faith ‡."

Under the auspices of an adviser like Lambert, we need not wonder that the new system of doctrine and discipline, which the landgrave promoted in

* Ep. II. 121. † Chytræus, XII. 346.
‡ Scult. xxvi. 28.

Hesse, had all the principal features of the Reformation in Saxony. Soon after the synod of Homburg, he ordered the monks and nuns to leave the monasteries; and by means of their revenues he founded several hospitals, and also an university at Marpurg. He directed the images to be taken out of the churches, and appointed faithful ministers in each of them; and among his various new institutions, he remembered to fix the poor exile Lambert in the professorship of divinity of Marpurg, where the good man died at an advanced age, in the year 1530*. CENT. XVI.

6. Luther's Sentiments respecting War and Defence.—His Labours.

Luther's sentiments on resistance.

During these transactions, and while the labours of the reformers were crowned with such signal success, Martin Luther, who was never behind any of them in zeal, industry, and exertion, exhibited to the world a brilliant specimen of the purity of his principles, and of his entire submission to the injunctions of the Gospel. We have already seen that the accession of the landgrave to the Lutheran cause had considerable influence in Germany. The gentle, pacific decree of the diet of Spires is a proof of this; and so is the commencement of a defensive confederacy, and the progress made in that prudent measure. But it was not without difficulty, it should seem, that this bold and enterprising prince, in the vigour of youth, and conscious of the goodness of his intentions, could be restrained within the limits of defensive operations. John the Constant, however, under the direction of a sounder discretion, and probably of a more scrupulous conscience, checked this hasty disposition to take up arms, and in the mean time consulted Luther on the momentous practical question of resistance. As this very

* Scult. xxvi. p. 31. Chytr. 346. Comm. de Luth. II. XIV.

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circumstance evinces the high estimation in which our reformer was then held as a sage divine and an honest casuist, the reader will do well to consider, whether the answers which he gave on this occasion correspond to the opinion undeniably prevalent at that time, respecting his superior wisdom and integrity. The following judgment of Luther was conveyed to the elector through the medium of his chancellor Pontanus.—"That the elector of Saxony had no superior but one, namely, the emperor; and that therefore he was justified in defending his own subjects, and also in repelling any violent acts of his adversaries among the princes.—That if the ecclesiastical princes, or their allies, should pretend to have the emperor's orders, the elector was not bound to believe them; that he had a right to presume such orders to be surreptitious; for that Charles V. was in Spain, and that his letters to the elector breathed nothing but kindness and peace.—That if the edict of Worms should be made the pretext, the answer should be, It was notorious that that edict was fabricated without the consent of the princes, and against the consent of the leading ones; that the prelates, and they only, had concurred in it; that it had in fact been abrogated by the decrees of Nuremberg and of Spires; that therefore all attempts of the princes and States to execute the said edict, were unjust, and might be resisted with a good conscience."

Nice distinctions by Luther.

The nice and delicate question remained still to be answered.—What was to be done, supposing that the emperor should avowedly arm the adverse party with his authority?—A puzzling question this; and which probably has never yet received, nor can receive, a better answer than that which Luther gave to it;

"That the elector and his friends would still be at liberty to protest and remonstrate; that in that way the rights of the princes might be preserved,

and the fraudulent practices of their adversaries detected; and that in every event, TIME WOULD BE GAINED BY THIS STEP:—and lastly," says Luther, "God will take care of the rest." CENT. XVI.

He then deprecates, in the strongest terms, every idea of commencing an offensive war, or any war otherwise than against aggressors, agreeably to the grand rule, "They that take the sword, shall perish by the sword." Lastly, he concludes with these remarkable words:

"If the landgrave will not act consistently with these principles, but will at all events have recourse to arms, it will be better for the elector to dissolve the alliance at once.—But not so, in case force should be used against the elector, or the landgrave, or their allies; they will then have a right to repel force by force*."

There is no part of Luther's character which appears to have been less understood, or more misrepresented, than that of his quiet peaceable disposition as a citizen, and in general a member of civil society. From the strong language which he often uses against popish abuses and corruptions, and from the vigorous efforts he made to correct or reform them, he has been too hastily pronounced to be a man of a turbulent and seditious stamp.

There is however an abundance of testimonies produced in various parts of this volume, which must prove satisfactorily that there is no ground whatever for such an opinion; and moreover, that directly the contrary is the truth: but these testimonies have been almost entirely either suppressed or disregarded by modern historians.

The same valuable memoir on the question of RESISTANCE contains another piece of admirable advice which Luther gave to the elector; namely, That his highness would do well, seriously and in writing to

Hints to the clergy of Saxony.

Com. de Luth. XVIII. 3.

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admonish his clergy of their neglect of duty, and to tell them, that this was so very great, as to have compelled him to take the matter into consideration himself: that the salvation of men's souls, as well as the peace of the community, in these times of dispute and contention, imperiously required him to ensure better instructions from the pulpit: And, as a clear proof that these were the sole objects of his present monition, he should content himself with earnestly entreating them to promote among his subjects pure Evangelical doctrine, and to cultivate a spirit of tranquillity and concord; but that if, after all, they should fail to do this, he would no longer run the hazard of tumults in his dominions; he would no longer bear their neglect and opposition to the Gospel, nor any longer be a partaker in their guilt *.

At the conclusion of this wise counsel, Luther adds a remarkable clause, to this effect:

"I have persuaded myself that such a step on the part of the elector may be useful, by demonstrating to mankind the purity of the motives of the reformers, and by affording comfort afterwards to their own consciences, in the reflection that they can say truly,—"Nothing, which was not directly opposite to the word of God, was left untried for the prevention of a rupture with the superior clergy."

The war with the Turks.—Luther's sentiments.

It may not be improper in this place to give a brief account of Luther's sentiments concerning the war with the Turks. The Hungarian ambassadors had been at the late diet of Spires, to solicit assistance against them; but through the excessive folly and presumption of Lewis II. king of Hungary, Solyman, who was then invading his kingdom at the head of 300,000 men, obtained a decisive victory in the plains of Mohacz, on the 29th of August 1526, only two days after the recess of the diet. In this fatal battle the flower of

* Com. de Luth. XVIII. 4 & 5.

the Hungarian nobility perished, with upwards of 20,000 men; and Lewis was drowned in his flight *. The victorious Sultan, after overrunning Hungary, penetrated into Austria, and even besieged Vienna. This progress of the infidels was truly alarming; and an indistinct notion prevailed, that the reformers thought it wicked to fight against the Turks. In such circumstances it became the duty of a man who possessed the power of directing the judgment of so many thousands of the inhabitants of Germany, to speak plainly, and to rectify such misconceptions as might prove injurious to the safety of his country. The duty of a Christian soldier was a point which Luther had deeply considered; and in forming conclusions on the subject, he constantly rested with an implicit obedience on what he conceived to be the Divine will, as revealed in Scripture.

Luther exhorts the Germans to oppose the Turks. A. D. 1529.

It was in the year 1529, when the enemy was even at the door, that our author published, in the German language, a little tract, for the purpose of rousing his countrymen to take up arms in the common defence.—In this performance he chides severely the common people, who, he understood, had shown themselves so ignorant and barbarous as to express wishes for the success of the Turks; and at the same time he blames the preachers for having dissuaded their congregations from being concerned in this war, and for representing the profession of arms as unlawful. It was painful to him to find himself calumniated as the cause of the present irruption of the infidels, as he had been also of the rebellion of the peasants; but there was no ground whatever for the charge. He did not deny, he said, that formerly he had maintained, "That to fight against the Turks was to fly in the face of God himself, who was visiting us for our sins; and that this was one of the positions which had been selected

* Dupin. Robertson.

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from his writings, and condemned in the bull of Leo X. But, he asked, what were the existing circumstances at that time? The dignity of magistrates and governors was oppressed, and held in no estimation; and the pope exercised an usurped domination over all the princes. He affirmed that he himself was the first who had opened men's eyes on that subject,—to the great satisfaction of the late elector Frederic. In fact, the war with the Turks was then the war of the pope; it was an offensive war, and a war founded on no good principle: it was made a pretence for exhausting Germany of its money by the sale of indulgences: and neither penitence nor amendment of life,—without which it is vain to hope for success in war,—was so much as thought of. Moreover, it was at the same time pretended to be the peculiar duty of Christians to take up arms against the infidels; whereas he scrupled not to profess an opinion directly opposite. He conceived, that the duties of men, considered as Christians, consisted in things of a very different nature; and that the kingdom of Christ was not of this world. Still less had the pope and the clergy to do with wars; and no success could be expected, where bishops and priests neglected their proper functions, and gave attention to military concerns. He had been told, on good authority, that Francis I. well deserved his late defeat at Pavia, for having made an alliance with the pope, and taught his army to view the contest in which they were engaged as the cause of THE CHURCH, and to use the word CHURCH as a watch-word.

Further; had there really existed, at the time above-mentioned, any threatening symptoms of war, Luther said, he would have taken care to have made his meaning more clear and distinct. At present, the circumstances were very much altered: the war was become strictly defensive; the enemy had no just ground for waging war at all against the Chris-

tians; and their objects were purely plunder and murder. Such an invader might be resisted with a good prospect of success, even by Christians with the emperor at their head. But then the Christian soldier ought seriously to turn to God in prayer, both public and private, and no longer lay stress on processions, private masses, and invocations of saints. The emperor also should not wage the war, to gratify ambition and a thirst for glory, but consider himself as the leading prince, and as placed in that situation by Almighty God, to discharge well the great duty of conducting the defensive operations of the people. All the princes ought to view the matter in the same light, and no longer contend in the diets for precedence, or consume their incomes in luxury. These also, said he, are the points upon which the pope's legates ought strenuously to insist at the meetings of the diets, instead of squabbling with Luther about fastings and the marriages of the monks.—There appears throughout this little work much of the author's native candour and vigour of mind, and of his reverence for the written Word *. CENT. XVI.

Regulations in the Saxon churches by Luther.

It was to be expected, from the active spirit of Luther, that he should employ to some important purposes that precious interval of tranquillity which the church enjoyed after the diet of Spires.—The regulation and improvement of the liturgies and rites of those churches which had embraced the new doctrinal system of the reformers, was an object well worthy the serious attention of that able pilot who had safely conducted his vessel through so many shelves, and rocks, and tempests. He proceeded in this business with the utmost caution and modesty: he published the new mode of administering the sacrament, adopted in the last year at Wittemberg; but in his preface he says, "Far be from me the affectation of requiring other persons either to follow

* Comment. de Luth. II. LII.

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our example, or to alter any good formularies at present in use. The plan here proposed has its merit; but I am in no wise prejudiced in its favour to the exclusion of others." In the next place he provided homilies to be read by such ministers as had not the gift of preaching,—a very necessary precaution, while Evangelical knowledge was at so low an ebb. He also recommended the study of the Latin tongue throughout the dominions of the elector of Saxony, that there might be men capable of instructing foreign nations; lest, like the Waldenses in Bohemia, they should not be able to communicate Christian information to any who did not understand the language of their teachers. Further; the catechising of youth was one of Luther's favourite objects: then the exposition of the creed, of the Lord's prayer, and of the ten commandments, he insisted on as of the highest moment; and thus, by the use of moderate and conciliatory methods, though the advances towards perfection were gradual, the public order of religion, through the indefatigable labours of this eminent servant of God, in no great length of time, wore a new aspect in Saxony, to the unspeakable benefit of that country *.

His expositions of certain Psalms.

One of Luther's publications, in the year 1526, was an exposition of certain Psalms; and was intended by its author to serve a peculiar good purpose, beyond the instruction which it might afford to his countrymen in Saxony.—He inscribed the work to Mary of Austria, the relict of Lewis king of Hungary, whose miserable death in flight we have mentioned above †. This princess was the sister of Charles V., and of Ferdinand, who succeeded to the kingdom of Hungary. Our author had conceived hopes she would tread in the steps of her sister, the queen of Denmark ‡, and that family afflictions might, under Divine Providence, operate in a similar manner to her spiritual good.—In his dedication, he tells the queen, that with much delight he had

* Com. de Luth. II. XX. † Page 457. ‡ Page 128.

heard of her good will to the Gospel; and had purposed to entreat her to promote with all her might the cause of God's word in Hungary, and to protect the innocent from the persecutions which, he understood, they suffered from the powerful and tyrannical prelates; but that having now heard the sad story of the king's death, he should content himself with suggesting to her mind some consolatory reflections, drawn from the best and truest source of comfort, the sacred Scriptures.—With his usual frankness he takes occasion to explain to her the nature of the Evangelical cause, which he himself had now supported for some years past; as also the iniquity of that bitter hostility which he had experienced from the Roman See. With a dignified elevation of style, he vindicates the courageous, the innocent, and, in general, the truly religious character of John Huss; and, lastly, he reminds the princess of the instability of all human power and grandeur, and exposes the vanity of placing any hope or confidence in these. In fact, there seemed to be very fair ground for apprehending that Mary might have become an exalted ornament of Christianity. In the year 1530, she was present at the diet of Augsburg; and, while there, would not be hindered from hearing Evangelical discourses. Moreover, she boldly admonished her brother, Charles V., not to suffer himself to be duped by his clergy, as her husband Lewis, and her brother Ferdinand, had been. Alas! prosperity afterwards severely tried the soundness of the religion of this princess, as it has done in thousands of other instances. Being called to the administration of the government of the Low Countries, which had long been the scene of most barbarous papal persecutions, she avoided the suspicion of Lutheranism, and is said to have returned back to the profession of Popery. It is however recorded to her praise, that she conducted herself with singular prudence and moderation. So mild and pacific

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were the principles of Mary, that when Charles V. delivered over to his son Philip the care and management of his Belgian provinces, he recalled his sister into Spain; suspecting that her counsels would rather obstruct, than promote, the objects which he had then in view. It is remarkable, that a kind Providence should have favoured this emperor with the instructive warning of having had TWO sisters who listened to the precious invitation of Evangelical religion: and it does not seem improbable, that the consideration of the dealings of God with his female near relatives should have made some useful impressions on his mind in the latest scenes of his life.

Henckell, the chaplain of Mary of Hungary, is praised by Erasmus.

Mary had a favourite chaplain, named John Henckell, a man of excellent principles, one who favoured the Lutheran cause, and was present with the queen-dowager, at the diet of Augsburg, in 1530*.

Erasmus, of whom it is now unnecessary to say that he grew daily more and more hostile to Lutheranism, wrote to this good divine a long letter, penned with all that ambiguous prudence, guarded artifice, and malignant insinuation, which have fixed the most indelible stains on the character of this eminent scholar. The composition is a perfect masterpiece in Erasmus's way. It has been well criticised by the pious Seckendorf, who pronounces this epistle as meriting most peculiar notice, "if there be any one that does so in all the large volume." Erasmus had heard of Henckell's propensity to the Reformers, and particularly of the good opinion which he had conceived of Luther. He writes to him with a manifest intent to undermine as much as possible, and even blacken the motives of the Saxon divine; and it must be owned that he executes his purpose with the most consummate address. Indirectly, Erasmus extols himself, abuses the monks,

* Spalatinus's Account. Com. de Luth. II. XXII. 6.

describes the evils which prevailed in the church before the commencement of the Lutheran controversy, and laments pathetically the faults on both sides. He equally disapproves of the cruel persecutions of the Romanists, and the vociferations of the upstart preachers, many of whom, he says, were persons of a contemptible and infamous character:—They talked of Gospel doctrine, but where, he asks, were we to look for Gospel fruit? He owned he had formerly conceived some good hopes of Luther; but, says Erasmus, I speak from knowledge, when I say, he suffers himself to be played upon, by vain, empty persons, who are incapable of advising him on the most trifling subject*. He boasts, that he foresaw the religious differences would end in sedition; thus malignantly joining the cry of the Papists, in laying to the charge of the Lutherans the late rebellion of the rustics. He then congratulates himself on his own good management, in having kept clear OF THE FACTION, notwithstanding that he had been abused by the Papists, and flattered by the Protestants. Before he concludes, he plainly shows, that at that very moment, with the pen in his hand, he was smarting under the recent lashes he had received from Luther's answer to his Diatribe. But, "charity," said he, "hopeth all things;" and therefore he would not give up the hope that good would still arise from the evil; especially as in some places, he artfully observes, there were springing up Gospel preachers of a different stamp from those whom he had just mentioned; preachers, who loved the truth, but hated tumults; who adorned their doctrine by a life of integrity, and by mild, agreeable manners, and who looked upon the character of a teacher of the Gospel as inconsistent with that of a buffoon." CENT. XVI.

Thus does Erasmus, with the most consummate

* Persons, who could not teach him how to boil a cabbage. Eras. Op. III. 914.

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address, point out and praise a sort of middle path in religion, and at the same time, with a delicate adulation, insinuate that his friend Henckell, to whom he was then writing, was among the few persons who were actually treading that path. The events, which followed, justify the historian in observing, that such systems of refinement and mediocrity are, in effect, perfect chimeras; that the Cross of Christ must be undergone by those who mean to glorify God, to preserve a good conscience, to rebuke, by their lives and conversation, the evil practices of the world, and to promote the salvation of mankind. Erasmus during many years was employed in his nugatory scheme; and while he courted the favour of the great, and secured himself from the danger of persecution, he promoted not one of those peculiar truths of Christian doctrine, on account of which the good Reformers suffered grievously from the tyranny of powerful princes and prelates.

The object of Erasmus.

It would detain us too long to make copious extracts from the discourses which Luther about this period, amidst his multiplied occupations, still found time to compose.

Extracts from Luther's Sermons.

1. On the epithet, "Wonderful," applied to Christ in Isaiah ix., he makes these observations: "The man whom HE chuses to make truly godly, he causes first to feel himself almost a despairing sinner; whom he chuses to make wise, he first makes a fool; whom he chuses to make strong, he first renders weak: he delivers to death the man whom he means to quicken; he depresses to hell whomsoever he intends to exalt to heaven. . . . This is that WONDERFUL KING, who is nearest to those from whom he seems to be the most remote."

2. On the council in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, he takes notice, that the whole multitude of the disciples seemed to stagger at the Divine promises, and would have rashly rejected the doctrine

of justification by faith only, had not two or three of the apostles stood in the way, and boldly maintained that fundamental article of Christianity: That even Peter himself relapsed, in part, into the same error of self-righteousness; an error, says he, "which is always pullulating afresh, and which afterwards, under the papacy, became strong and influential. So little dependence is to be placed on councils, and so necessary is the aid and direction of the Holy Spirit, that men may adhere steadfastly to the word of God." CENT. XVI.

3. In another Discourse, he enters more fully into the grand question concerning faith and works, and repeats what he had now taught for years in Germany.—A few sentences may here suffice. "Satan," says he, "himself sometimes teaches the necessity of works, and introduces even good things, in order that men, by relying on their specious good deeds, may be diverted from the faith of the Gospel. I cannot insist on this too much; for ye will find after my decease, this artifice will be practised in a manner which ye do not at present suspect. Never suppose that by your works ye are made Christians. Christ is proposed to us in a two-fold character: first, he makes us sons of God; this is done by the WORD alone, exclusive of any work: If it is his will to become yours, then you will become his; and he will save you by his blood and passion. Satan hates this doctrine, and false teachers never preach it. Secondly, Christ is proposed as our example. If his word be in my heart, I am in possession of the great commandment, that is, charity; nevertheless, he does not expect from me, as a depraved creature, the fruits of charity, but through a new spirit, imparted to me by the hearing of his WORD, and by believing on him*."

Anxious for the extension of Evangelical knowledge, the pious elector of Saxony had instituted a theological lecture at Wittemberg, with a salary of Anecdotes of Luther and Melancthon.

* Comm. de Luth. II. XXII. et XXIII.

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two hundred florins. Melancthon, the lecturer, scrupled to accept the salary, alleging that he had not leisure to discharge the duty properly: nor could his scruples be removed, but by an explanatory letter from the elector himself, written to him at the instance of Luther, who ventured to tell the prince, that were he to give Melancthon the proposed salary GRATIS for a year or two, he would well deserve it, having already, during two years, read very laborious and very useful lectures on the Scriptures without any salary at all. "The knowledge of the Scriptures," said Luther, "is much called for in every country; and therefore I would gladly promote a lecture of this sort. But there is no need to encroach too much on the time and strength of the lecturer: a lecture of this kind, even once in the week, might answer the purpose."

Anecdotes like this, might seem of little consequence; if any thing can be said to be of little consequence, which illustrates the simplicity, the integrity, and the disinterestedness of the first Reformers.

Another instance of Luther's kind and generous attention may deserve to be noticed*. He interceded with the elector in favour of certain Franciscan monks, of the monastery of Wittemberg, who were reduced to a state of extreme indigence. "This neglect is not your fault," said he to the prince; "but there are among your courtiers those who ought to have mentioned to your highness the situation of these poor creatures. It is a disgrace to the Gospel; and who knows but there may be among them some one who shall judge us all at the last day†."

Numerous are the proofs of the gentle steps by which the Reformation was conducted in the electorate of Saxony, notwithstanding all the slanders of Erasmus, and the fictions of the papal historians‡.

* Seck. II. Add. 64. a. & b. † Alluding to 1 Cor. vi. 2.
‡ Such as Cochlæus, Maimbourg, Pallavicini, &c.

Indeed, if real Christians have, on any occasion, been active in promoting revolutions by violence and iniquity, all we can say is, their evidence of belonging to Christ's little flock must, at that particular season, be deemed very slender and suspicious. The maxims of the Gospel are widely different from those of the world in general, or even from those of conceited theorists and lofty pretenders to Philosophy. It is, however, but too true, that the visionary notions of the latter have been much celebrated in our days; though, happily, it is at length pretty well understood, not only that they are unsupported by facts, but even confuted by the practice of the very persons who professed to adopt and defend them. CENT. XVI.

7. Persecutions of the Reformers.

The blessed calm which the church enjoyed after the diet of Spires, must not be understood to have extended beyond those provinces and districts which were under the jurisdiction of such princes and governors as were favourable to the propagation of Christian truth and liberty. In Bohemia and Hungary, Ferdinand, now king of both countries, raged against the Lutherans with all the fury which papal ignorance and superstition, exasperated by opposition, could inspire. The rigour of the persecution in Bohemia may be inferred from a single instance. A person named Nicolas Tornar, and a widow of sixty years, named Clara, suffered death in the flames with Christian fortitude, merely because they denied their belief in the corporeal presence of Christ in the Sacrament. Nicolas Tornar, and Clara.

In Germany also, two remarkable instances of martyrdom are recorded. 1. John Huglin, minister of Lindau, was directed by the bishop of Constance to recant the Christian faith; and on refusal was treated precisely as John Huss had been, that J. Huglin, and Peter Spengler.

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is, degraded in the most abusive language, and then delivered over to the secular power. This man, while he was preparing for the fire, sang several songs of praise with the utmost cheerfulness. 2. Peter Spengler had nothing laid to his charge, except that he had been heard to lament the blindness of the Papists, and to exhort their clergy to read their bibles. By stealth he was hurried away to Friburg, delivered over to the council of regency at Ensishem, and by them condemned to be held under water till he was dead *.

George Carpenter of Munich.

At Munich, the capital of Bavaria, George Carpenter was burnt alive in 1527, because he refused to subscribe to the Romish corruptions. This sufferer, when some of his pious brethren requested him to give them, while in the flames, some sign of the firmness of his mind, answered in these memorable words, "Let this be looked upon by you as the most certain sign of the steadiness of my faith; that as long as I am able to open my mouth, or even to mutter, I will never cease to praise God, and confess the name of our Redeemer:" and it is said, the man kept his word †.

Leonhard Cæsar.

But one of the most affecting stories of this kind is the martyrdom of Leonhard Cæsar, in the same year 1527. He was born in Bavaria; and having begun to preach the Gospel, he was summoned to Passau, to answer for his conduct; and there, by imprisonment and menaces, was at length induced to recant, and was dismissed to his parish, and allowed to officiate again. Leonhard, however, was so upbraided by his conscience, and inwardly ashamed of his unfaithfulness, that, in about six months he quitted his station, and visited Wittemberg and other places where Evangelical liberty flourished. After two years absence, hearing that his father was at the point of death, he ventured to return to his own country, where the minister of the

* Scultet. XXVI. † Acta Mart. in Scult. XXVII.

village betrayed him; and Leonhard was carried to Passau, and there imprisoned during ten weeks before he underwent the least examination. At length, when reduced to a very weak condition, he was called upon to answer hastily a variety of questions, read to him by the famous Eccius of Ingolstadt, who had been sent for on purpose to interrogate, confound, and overawe the poor heretic. His own relations earnestly solicited him to retract; but finding THAT in vain, they begged he might be allowed to have an advocate, and also a month's respite to recruit his feeble, debilitated frame. All was refused by the popish rulers; and Leonhard was brought publicly before a solemn tribunal of the bishop and a number of canons, with Eccius among them. Then it was, that the persecuted prisoner, armed with Divine strength, rose more formidable to the powers of darkness, than if, through infirmity, he had never been guilty of a former lapse in denying the faith. His adversaries peremptorily ordered all the proceedings to be carried on in Latin, for the purpose of keeping the multitude in ignorance. But Leonhard scrupled not before the whole audience to speak German repeatedly, and to defend the doctrines he professed with prodigious spirit and animation. He was frequently interrupted by the official of the court, and told that he was not brought there to PREACH. The grand protestant doctrines were the articles he maintained. "Faith alone," said he, "justifies: works are the evidences of faith; but in the act of justification, works are as distinct from faith as heaven is from the earth. The mass is no sacrifice; neither is there any sacrifice for sin, except the blood of Christ." He refused to enter into any dispute about transubstantiation; and contended, that it was enough to insist on the words of Christ, and to believe, that faithful communicants become real partakers of his body and blood.

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This good martyr wrote from his prison to his

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friend Stifelius, at that time chaplain to a lady of distinction in Austria, in strains of the most unaffected piety, thanking God who had honoured, as he called himself, his most unworthy servant, and the greatest of sinners, with such an opportunity to confess his precious name, blessed for ever. He entreated his dear brother in Christ to pray for him, that he might remain steadfast to the end *. Much pains were taken to procure his release and dismission. Noblemen of the first distinction, even the elector of Saxony himself, interceded with the potentates of Bavaria, but all to no purpose. The popish hierarchy proceeded to degrade him, and then gave him up to the civil magistrate; but not without first going through the usual mockery of praying that his life might be spared. His mournful relations, entirely against his own wishes, made their last effort to obtain the poor favour, that their kinsman might be allowed to die by the sword instead of the flames. But the stern duke of Bavaria, instigated no doubt by his priests, issued a peremptory mandate "for committing the incorrigible heretic alive to the flames."

The patience and constancy of Leonhard.

The man's patience, and constancy in prayer, the ardour of his soul, and his confidence towards God, are described as beyond belief. When the dreadful moment came, and he was placed on the pile, he said, "O Lord Jesus, partake in my sufferings; support me, give me strength;" and, lastly, as soon as the fire began to burn, he cried out with a loud voice, "Save me, Jesus; I am thine!" and soon after expired. Luther was vehemently affected with this tragedy; and professed himself ashamed, as he had done on former occasions, that he had not yet been thought worthy of martyrdom. "Oh," said he, "that I might witness such a confession, and suffer such a death! but God's will be done! Oh, ye persecutors, if ye thus thirst after blood and car-

* Ep. II. 329, by Aurifaber.

nage, why do ye not turn your arms against the Turks? For after all, ye cannot oppress the cause of God. I gave you Gamaliel's advice when I was before the emperor at Worms: but all is in vain*."

To their common friend, Stifelius, he speaks thus of the death of Leonhard. "Oh wretched me—how far below this man am I! I am a wordy preacher, he a powerful performer. May Christ grant that we may be enabled to imitate this holy character†!"

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FROM THE PERSECUTIONS, AFTER THE FIRST DIET OF SPIRES, TO THE VISITATION OF THE ELECTORATE OF SAXONY.

1. LUTHER'S TEMPTATIONS.
2. NARRATIVES OF BUGENHAGIUS AND OF JONAS.
3. DISTINCTION BETWEEN DEEP RELIGIOUS CONCERN, AND CONSTITUTIONAL MELANCHOLY.
4. LUTHER'S QUARREL WITH GEORGE OF SAXONY.
5. VISITATION OF THE ELECTORATE OF SAXONY.

1. LUTHER'S TEMPTATIONS.

BUT Providence had designed trials for Luther, more calculated to humble and subdue his spirit, and to perfect the strength of God in his weakness, even than martyrdom itself. The uncommon suc-

* Alt. III. 792. In S. p. 85. † Ep. II. 355.

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cess with which his labours had been crowned, the celebrity of his character, the favour of princes and nobles, and the admiration in which he was held by all the professors of Evangelical truth, were circumstances which had a strong tendency to exalt him in his own eyes, especially when the native firmness and intrepidity of his temper, is taken into the account. In fact, however, this extraordinary man had never been without a thorn in the flesh*, which proved an effectual counterpoise to all his attainments and all his successes, and prevented him from being "exalted above measure."—What was the nature of that thorn in the flesh, which disturbed the tranquillity of St. Paul, it may not be easy to form even a probable conjecture; but in regard to Luther, his case may be understood without much difficulty by those who are conversant in his writings, and who themselves have, in some degree, tasted of the grace of God in the Christian life.—It was not a propensity to carnal gratifications, but to a PECULIAR species of spiritual pride and self-righteousness. I call it peculiar, not because many of the very wisest and best of Christians have not felt the same evil from age to age, but for the purpose of distinguishing it from that more common, and more dangerous sort of pretension to spirituality, which leads the mind to boast of its attainments, and to rest in an antinomian security. Persons of this latter stamp are usually careless and easy; and in the end, frequently prove altogether unsound. Those of the former, rarely or never do so; and for this reason—there is in their character, at bottom, a profound humility, together with a quick and lively sense of the evil of sin. Their defect properly consists in unbelief. The fulness, the freeness, the extent of the loving-kindness of God in redemption, is veiled from their eyes: they cannot believe that God is so plenteous in goodness and mercy, as

The natural propensity of Luther's mind.

* 2 Cor. xii.

in Scripture he is represented to be; and hence, as a consequence of this blindness, proceeds that PECULIAR sort of self-righteousness, so destructive of Evangelical comfort. They are too wicked, they think, to be saved just as they are: they must make themselves, at least SOMETHING better before they are entitled to mercy. Thus, notwithstanding all the real humility of this character, there is in it still some mixture of pride, which is only to be subdued at the CROSS of Christ, where the true penitent sinner at length learns, that the very way to frustrate the mercy of God is to mix, in the great concern of justification, any of his own petty performances with the merits of the Redeemer. CENT. XVI.

In the mean time, the malicious policy of Satan is, to let alone the spiritually proud antinomian; that is, to leave him pleased with his own attainments and regardless of personal holiness, while he buffets, with all his might, the poor Christian soldier of Luther's opposite temperament. Here, by his artful temptations, he works secretly upon what is called in Scripture, the OLD MAN; and by false imaginations and plausible reasonings, endeavours to reduce the soul to despair, to hide from it the consolations of the Divine promises, and to drive the distressed sinner into a state of legal bondage, or even into Atheism itself. In the active scenes of Luther's life, in the distress of his external persecutions, in the heat of his controversies, in his wars with the papacy, or even in his pacific employments of preaching and writing comments on the word of God, little or nothing of this sort appears;—it is in his closet, in his conversations with his intimates, with his parish priest, or his wife, or when his fellow-labourers vex and irritate him by their opposition: or, lastly, when his own health and spirits are broken down by incessant toils, and cares, and watchings, these are the seasons when IN PRIVATE we may expect to see the Saxon hero of the Reformation, The policy of Satan with an antinomian.

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more or less, according to circumstances, in a state of imbecility and confusion of mind, or even of fear, anxiety, complaint, and tribulation *.

But be it remembered that, extreme cases excepted, there is in the public deportment of Luther no material difference to be observed. He thinks, he reasons, he writes, he preaches, precisely in the same manner †. Nay, he knows how to give the very best spiritual advice to those who apply to him under afflictions similar to his own. He even sometimes jests with such persons, with a view to do them good, when he thinks their case calls for encouragement to cheerfulness; and yet internally, he is perhaps much disposed to blame himself for having gone too far in that way. It is recorded, that on one occasion, he cried out, "People conclude from my ordinary, gay conversation, that I walk on beds of roses and on nothing else; but God knows what I daily feel ‡." All this may appear strange and contradictory to those who have not been conversant with such things: The solution is; CHRIST, THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH, both protects its members from delusion, and at the same time disciplines his ablest servants by afflictions; and though sometimes the thorns in the flesh, called messengers of Satan §, may cause great tumult and distress in the souls of faithful ministers of the Gospel, such trials shall not ultimately avail, either to the subversion of doctrine, or the declension of godliness.

The great defect of Luther's character.

That great defect in meekness, which is constantly to be deplored in the character of the Saxon Reformer, as it doubtless gave the tempter a great advantage over him, so did it require the very discipline and chastisement here described. By a strong and piercing understanding, Luther had discovered the revealed remedy of our fallen nature, and enforced the use of it with almost unexampled wisdom and

* Narratio Pomerani, II. 337. † Ibid. 341. b.
‡ Ibid. 337. § 2 Cor. xii.

energy; nevertheless, this great physician fails to apply, in his own malady, the efficacious medicines he has so often prescribed with success to others.

Luther severely afflicted in mind.

Early in 1527, we behold that high unconquered spirit, which had stood calm and secure amidst the rage of popes and princes, lie prostrate under the pressure of internal temptation. An infectious disorder prevailed at Wittemberg, and the elector ordered the academics to retire to Jena; but Luther thought it his duty not to desert his flock. At the same time he severely, but justly rebuked several, who when in health had altogether neglected the Sacrament, and now in the hour of danger eagerly pressed for the administration of it, even at the peril of the minister's life.

Causes of his affliction.

In the course of this year, he suffered much, and for a considerable time together, from bodily complaints, and thereby became extremely debilitated afterwards; but it does not at all appear that he was attacked by the prevailing epidemic: that disorder however was in his house for many months, and his wife was at that time pregnant.—No wonder, therefore, that he should describe his spirits as weak and agitated, and often oppressed with fears and perturbations. Then it was, that Satan seems to have taken the advantage, to inject his fiery darts into the mind of this devoted servant of God, at a time when almost every object appeared grievous and alarming to his irritable imagination. The dilapidation of the ecclesiastical revenues by the avarice and rapacity of the noblemen*, who took advantage of the excessive good nature of the elector, was one serious affliction to the mind of Luther; who, in regard to his own personal condition, was perfectly disinterested, and was only anxious, that through the means of judicious and economical regulations, there might be sufficient funds for the improvement, extension, and new foundation of various

* Com. de Luth. XXIX. 3.

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protestant establishments. Then the opposition of the Sacramentarian reformers gave him sensible uneasiness*; though in this he certainly ought to have confessed, that his chief suffering arose from the mortification of his pride, and that he had no very material reason to complain of want of respect on the part of those godly persons, namely, Zuingle, Ecolampadius, and others whom he ought joyfully and cordially to have received as brethren and fellow-soldiers, fighting the same cause of a persecuted Gospel. It is true that Zuingle, in the course of controversy, could sometimes use language sufficiently bitter and contemptuous; but Luther ought still to have remembered, that he himself had been in that respect the aggressor to a most vexatious degree;—he did indeed remember it, and with many tears, as we shall see by-and-by;—but it was his duty to have owned his fault long before, and not merely in his chamber to a few private friends, but openly to all the world, and to have repaired the breach both by candid acknowledgments, and by ceasing from the strife. But Luther did neither one nor the other. On the contrary, Zuingle, the leader of the Sacramentarians, though ordinarily by no means disposed to spare Luther, generously admitted in one of his publications, that his adversary was not, in any essential point, deficient in Evangelical light: and moreover, that at a time when there was not a single person to be found who should dare to brave the danger, he had boldly stood forward the first champion of the Gospel: and was the faithful David, raised by the Lord, to come forward and meet the great Goliath of Rome†. That Zuingle then and his associates did not agree with Luther in the tenet of Consubstantiation, while they sincerely and earnestly desired to unite with him in the bonds of the Gospel, and to honour him as the Father of the Reformation, ought to have

Encomium on Luther by Zuingle.

* Com. de Luth. XXXII. 4. † Op. Zuing. II. Exeg. 359.

been no object of discontent or distress to his mind. I gladly seize again the opportunity to convince my readers, that I have no desire to conceal the blemishes of the Saxon Reformer. He possessed uncommon excellencies; but they were stained with faults by no means inconsiderable. It is perfectly right that we should in this manner thoroughly examine the characters of men of real holiness; that we may distinguish them from the fictitious perfectionists of the Stoics, and learn to give the praise to that God who is justly jealous of his own glory. CENT. XVI.

Let us now listen to Martin Luther discovering the secret weakness and distress of his soul; and let us keep in mind that this is the very same man who was every day bidding open defiance to the greatest powers of Europe, both civil and ecclesiastical, and voluntarily hazarding his life for the sake of Christian truth and liberty. Extracts from Luther's Letters.

"My sins have brought upon me the heavy wrath of God. It is not enough, that the pope, the emperor, the princes, and bishops, should aim at my life, but my religious brethren also must torment my spirit. My sins, and all the powers of death, Satan and his angels, rage without ceasing. And what is my hope?—I say, if Christ should forsake me, I am undone. But he never will forsake such a poor miserable sinner. Mine enemies are mighty; and add affliction to affliction, now that I am under the Divine chastisement. But enough; let me not be querulous or impatient under the rod of Him, who smites and heals, who kills and makes alive. Blessed be his holy will! When the world and the prince of the world hate me in this manner, it is surely some proof that I belong to Christ. The critical situation of my wife increases my anxiety; and I am quite alarmed at what has just now happened to another pregnant lady, one of our neighbours, whom you know. She has been carried off rapidly by the prevailing epidemic. My present trials are Luther's distress of mind.

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great; but the All-powerful One has done great things for me. May Christ, whose pure doctrine I have taught and openly avowed, be my rock and my fortress! Amen*."

"It so pleases God, that I, who have been accustomed to comfort others, do myself stand in need of consolation. I have but one prayer, and I beseech you join with me in it;—that whatever Christ may be pleased to do with me, he would preserve me from ungratefully rebelling against him, whom I have hitherto preached and served with so much zeal; though at the same time I have offended him by many and great sins.—I still hope he will forgive me, and say, 'I am thy salvation'†."

"There is nothing that my sins do not deserve; but nevertheless I have comfort in the thought that I have taught the Gospel of Christ in godly sincerity, to the salvation of many souls. This galls Satan; and he would destroy me, together with the WORD itself. While others are called to the stake by the cruel tyrants, I suffer internally in spirit from the prince of this world. May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ perfect in me his holy will! Oh! how precious and delightful is the secret contemplation of that will‡!"

"I am still under the malice of Satan, who continues to buffet me. Pray for me. I have now languished for nearly three months, yet not so much in body as in mind: and am still far from well§."

"So may Christ comfort you," says Luther to his beloved friend Hausman, "as you comfort me. I thank my God, that Satan with all his wonderful craft, and all his powerful exertions, hath not yet been able to gain his will upon me. This is no ordinary temptation; and so skilful is that WICKED

* To Jonas, II. 343. b. † To Amsdorf, II. 344.
‡ To Agric. II. 347.
§ To Stifel. and to Jonas, II. 353, 354.

ONE in perverting the Scriptures, that my own knowledge of the sacred writings fails me on this occasion; I stand in need of the help of my friends, and I am thankful for their consolatory communications. I open my case to you in this manner, that you may pray the more earnestly for me; and may also yourself in like circumstances, if ever they should happen, be aware of the depths of Satan *."

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In the midst of his humiliation and confession of sin, we find Luther repeatedly taking comfort, as holy David did, from a consciousness of the integrity and purity of his motives. Thus to his friend Melancthon: "Pray for me—I am a miserable abject worm of the earth, distracted with sorrow. But as this is the good will of the Father of mercies, glory be to him, whatever be my sufferings. In regard to myself, there is but one thing on which I lay any stress; namely, that I have ever taught the word of God in its purity; and on no occasion corrupted the truth, either through a love of glory, or of gain †."

His sources of comfort.

To another friend he says, "Be serious in your prayers for me, that Christ may not leave me destitute; for I am utterly without strength. I am sensible that I stand in need of temptations, that God may be glorified in me, and that I may be humbled; and I have still a good hope that Christ will accept me, though I have listened and do listen too much to the devices of Satan. It is astonishing how he can transform himself, not to say into an angel of light, but into Christ himself. I am compelled to own his power; for he is outrageous in his attacks upon me. But Christ has faithfully preserved me, and will preserve me unto the end ‡."

* To Agric. II. 358. † Ibid. II. 356.

‡ To Brisger, II. 359. b.

2. Narratives of Bugenhagius, and of Jonas.

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The truth of the history of Luther's extreme sufferings in the course of these temptations, does not depend entirely on the descriptions contained in his own letters to his friends. Bugenhagius of Pomerania and Justus Jonas were present during one of the most severe attacks; and were so much affected by what they saw and heard, that they thought fit to record in writing some of the most material circumstances.

It appears however clear, that intense distress and agitation of spirit had laid hold of our Reformer, more than six months before that very remarkable seizure which they described. For he writes thus to Jonas on the 26th of December 1526:

Luther's Letter to Jonas, A. D. 1526.

"Oh, my Jonas, pray for me; sympathize with me in the agonies I undergo. The temptation is sometimes less, but returns again with greater fury. May Christ never forsake me! May he chastise me as a son, but not punish me as a rebel: May I be strong in faith, even unto the end*!"

Now the narratives of Bugenhagius and Jonas relate to what happened on the sixth of the succeeding July, when the mind of Luther must of necessity have been much broken down by the length and accumulation of his afflictions.—To transcribe the whole might detain us too long; but some remarkable parts of it may well deserve notice.

Their account is this; namely, that about eight o'clock in the morning of Saturday the sixth of July†, Bugenhagius was alarmed at being hastily sent for by Luther. He found him, however, in conversation with his wife, and looking just as usual. It seems he had that morning experienced a most tremendous temptation, entirely of a spiritual nature; and was seriously apprehensive, that if the

* Ep. II. 321. † Narrat. Pom. 335. et seq.

hand of God should again be so heavy upon him, he could not survive the attack. On the whole, he suspected he was about to die; and retired privately with his friend Bugenhagius, the parish minister, into his chamber, and there, in secret, committed every thing to God, and solemnly confessed his sins; and then, says the Writer, my MASTER entreated me, his PUPIL, to give him a word of consolation from the Scriptures. Afterwards he recovered so far as to be able to go out to dinner, and make the company cheerful, as he always did. But in the evening he was suddenly seized with a fainting fit; and cried out, "Oh! Doctor Jonas, I am sick; bring me water, or whatever you have, or I am gone." Jonas in a fright snatched up some cold water, and threw it freely over him. At that moment Luther was the very picture of death; but presently after, he began to pray most intensely: "If this be my last hour, O Lord, thy will be done! O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger; chasten me not in thy heavy displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O Lord.—I would willingly have shed my blood in the cause of thy word—but perhaps I was unworthy of that honour; thy will be done: only may thy name be glorified, whether by my death, or my life." CENT. XVI.

Then, in the most solemn manner, he recommended to the blessing of God, the ministry of that sacred Gospel, which had hitherto been committed to his charge. Upon which, Bugenhagius, almost senseless from deep and anxious concern, interrupted him, by saying, "Among your other prayers, my doctor, let this be one, that it would please God to continue your life for the good of us poor creatures, and of many others." "To die," replied Luther, "would be gain to me, but ...." and then, without finishing the sentence, he thus seriously addressed Justus Jonas and Bugenhagius. "The world delights in falsehoods; and it will certainly be

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said, that I recanted my doctrines in the hour of death. I desire, therefore, YOU and Bugenhagius to be witnesses of this my confession of faith:—I am perfectly satisfied that the doctrines which I have taught, concerning faith, charity, the cross, and the sacraments, are verily agreeable to the Word of God. I was led by Providence, and not voluntarily, to act the part which I have acted in the ministry. Many have blamed me for having been deficient in moderation; however, in some instances, there was in me no want of moderation but what may be justified; and most assuredly I have never intended harm to any person whatever. On the contrary, I have always wished to promote men's salvation, even the salvation of mine enemies."

After this, Luther gravely stated to the same persons his objections to the Sacramentarians; calling God to witness the sincerity of his heart, and lamenting with tears the numerous sects that arose, and neither spared the flock nor the Word of God.—"What a bustle," said he, "will they raise after my death!!" AND THEN, WITH DEEP SIGHS, AND A VAST EFFUSION OF TEARS, HE CONFESSED HOW INTEMPERATE HE HAD BEEN AT TIMES IN HIS LANGUAGE; and appealed to HIM WHO KNOWS ALL THINGS, that in THIS HE HAD GIVEN WAY to the infirmity of the flesh, thereby endeavouring to shake off the burden of his afflictions; but that his conscience did not reproach him with having harboured any ill-will.

"Be ye my witnesses, however," said he, "turning his face towards his two friends, "that, on the subjects of repentance and justification, I recant nothing of what I have written against the Pope. I feel that to be the Gospel of God, and the truth of God; and though some may think I have been too harsh, or taken too great liberty, I do not repent in that matter."

Luther then began to inquire after his child-

"Where is my dearest little John?"—The child was soon brought smiling to the father, who immediately commended 'his good little boy,' as he called him, and his mother, 'his dearest Kate,' to a good and gracious God. "Ye have no worldly goods," said he; "but God, who is the Father of the orphan, and judges the cause of the widow, will defend and keep you. I give thanks to thee, O Lord God, that thy providence has made me indigent in this world. I have neither house nor land nor possession to leave. Thou hast blessed me with a wife and children, and these I return back unto thee; O feed them, teach them, preserve them!" CENT. XVI.

To his wife he said, "My dearest Kate, if it is God's will, I request thee to submit to it: thou art my wedded wife; this thou wilt never forget; and let God's word be thy constant guide." He proceeded to say something to her concerning a few silver cups; and concluded with these words, "You know we have nothing else."

Conduct of the wife of Luther.

His wife displayed, on this trying occasion, extraordinary Christian fortitude. Almost heart-broken and frightened even to consternation, she yet preserved a good hope in her countenance. She allowed that not only herself and her child, but many other Christian people, would experience a great loss; but she entreated her husband not to be uneasy on her account; for if it really was God's will that he should depart, she could submit to it cordially. She therefore commended him to the Lord God, under whose protection he could not fail to be safe *.

By the external application of warmth, and by the use of cordial medicines internally, Luther soon recovered from the apparently immediate danger; but such had been the violence of the paroxysm, that he experienced the debilitating effects of it during the remainder of the year.

* Descrip. Tentat. 340.

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On the Sunday succeeding this memorable Saturday, Luther declared to Jonas, that on comparing the agony of his mind, during the spiritual temptation in the morning of the preceding day, with his bodily afflictions in the evening, the latter had not been half so distressing as the former. He added, ☞ "Doctor, I must mark the day. I was yesterday at school."

Afterwards he underwent many exacerbations of mind of a similar nature to that described, but none equally severe. Yet during all these trials, Bugenhagius assures us, that Luther attended to every part of his duty, that he seldom omitted his public lectures, and generally preached on the Lord's day. Bugenhagius was frequently called during the hours of the night, to visit him in his distress; and repeatedly heard him say, "The violence of the temptation stupifies me that I cannot open my mouth: as soon as ever it pleases God that I can lift up my heart in prayer, and make use of scriptural expressions, it ceases to prevail."

Bugenhagius tells us, that he found real satisfaction in being of some little service to Luther, through whose instrumentality, God had been pleased to reveal to himself the Gospel of his Son *.

3. Distinction between deep Religious Concern, and Constitutional Melancholy.

There are, I believe, those who will not be displeased to see this eminent servant of God in his imbecility; and to whom the narrative may be even consolatory and instructive. They will observe that such instances, when well considered, incontrovertibly prove that the excellency of evangelical power is of God, and not of man. Hence the nature of

* Joan. Bug. Pomer. 340. b.

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true Christian experience is both illustrated and confirmed. If I have enlarged on this case, I shall endeavour to be brief on the civil politics of Lutheranism. The propriety of thus distinguishing and treating the materials before me, is continually suggested by the original plan of this history. Add to this, the authorities for the preceding account are in the hands of very few persons, and, as far as I know, have never before been given in English to the public; and this may be a reason, among many others, why the real character of the Saxon Reformer has been so little understood. Let us regret sincerely the strength of his prejudices, the violence of his temper, the asperity of his language; but let us be glad, that, in the hour of affliction at least, he bitterly lamented his faults, and earnestly prayed "that by them he might not bring a scandal on the Gospel*." Amidst all his blemishes, men of candour and discernment will be compelled to recognize the most unequivocal marks of purity of intention.

Luther no enthusiast.

Those who are disposed to class this Reformer among ENTHUSIASTS, should pause, and seriously reflect what that word means in its ordinary acceptation, when applied to religious characters; and they may, in the end, be led to agree with the writer of this history, that few men, perhaps none, in any age, were ever less infected with that evil.

I less wonder, that, by modern writers, Martin Luther should have been suspected of a propensity to melancholy; because it is too much their practice to represent all deep concern and personal anxiety in matters of religion, and still more, all the distresses, afflictions, mournings, and temptations of godly persons, as implying a melancholic temperament of the natural constitution. Instances of this way of judging are innumerable.—Dr. Jortin †, for

* Ego enim orabo ne peccatis meis alicui scandalo sim. Narr. Bug. 338.

† Life of Erasmus, I. 126.

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example, considers Luther as having a tincture both of melancholy and enthusiasm; but when I turn to his authorities for such a sentiment, I find nothing to support it. The truth is, the Saxon Reformer was naturally of a cast directly the opposite to that which is here represented: and Melancthon expressly declares that he was of a LIVELY, SOCIAL, GENEROUS turn of mind *. Extraordinary then must be that penetration, which, in our times, can discover what escaped the observation of his most intimate friend and contemporary.

Nor melancholic.

Luther himself was fully persuaded of the agency of Satan in the production of those temptations, which afflicted him so grievously. Beausobre, on the contrary, peremptorily rejects the supposition, and, without the least ceremony or hesitation, pronounces them to have been the effect of melancholy.

A single declaration of this kind, when made by such an author as Beausobre †, who could not have been entirely ignorant of the private life of Luther, discloses at once the nature of the religious views and taste of this historian, and places it in a clearer light than many pages of cautious composition in divinity would probably have done. What a contrast to the positive decision of Beausobre is the following unaffected observation of the pious Bugenhagius, who, living daily in habits of the utmost familiarity with our Reformer, must have known him thoroughly! "If these things," says he, "happened to the prophets, and to the apostles, and to others, and even to our Lord Jesus Christ, it is not so very wonderful that they should happen to Luther ‡." Not one word of his being disposed to melancholy.

A necessary caution.

Yet it may not be improper to interpose a brief caution here suggested by the preceding remark of Bugenhagius. The Book of Psalms, and of Jere-

* Page 250 of this volume. Letter to Camerar.

† IIII. 12 & 13.

‡ History of Luther's Temptations, 341. b.

miah, and the Epistles of St. Paul, certainly contain descriptions of sensations similar to those of Luther; and it must therefore be admitted, that the choicest servants of God may very often be under great temporary sadness and dejection of mind; and this from different causes;—from a deep conviction of sin, and an awful sense of the wrath of God; such was Luther's case when he first entered the monastery, and for some time after;—from great darkness of mind, and the hiding of God's face; which David complains of repeatedly;—and again, from some unknown chastisement, as in the instance of St. Paul's thorn in the flesh. In the next place, we may safely admit further, that a true servant of God, under a severe discipline of this sort, may actually be reduced to a condition which shall, in many circumstances, RESEMBLE that of a person whose natural disposition is truly melancholic; but when all this is granted, it will not follow that the darkness and dejection and grief of a sincere penitent is any proof at all of a melancholic constitution by nature. It is true, the temperament MAY be of that kind, and then probably the more severe will be the sufferings of the holy man; but these things do not necessarily go together; and those who think they do, have yet to learn the manner of God's dealings, in subduing the pride and stubbornness of his fallen creatures. "Paul, thou art beside thyself;" "Luther mistook melancholy for a temptation of the devil;"* appear to me to be instances of a rash judgment, which are to be classed together, originating in a similar want of humility, of self-knowledge, and of submission to the Divine will.

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4. Luther's Quarrel with George of Saxony.

It must not however be dissembled, that the incivility and the violence of Luther's language, prejudiced the minds of many persons against the

* Beausobre.

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doctrines of this great Reformer. Learning, sincerity, sound understanding, and scriptural penetration, were so strikingly apparent in his productions, that even George of Saxony owned, that some of Luther's more early publications had given him considerable satisfaction; and, moreover, that he had not been displeased with what he had heard from him during the public disputations at Leipsic; but had hoped that those discussions might lead to a reform of the existing abuses *.

Brief account of Alexius Crosner.

This prince was certainly no libertine either in principle or practice; and it has been thought by some an inexplicable contradiction in his conduct, that, notwithstanding his excessive aversion to the Lutherans, he should have selected for his chaplain at Dresden Alexius Crosner, who was well known to be not only a proselyte of the reformers, but also particularly attached to Luther himself. Then the apparent difficulty is not in the least diminished by reflecting on the long duration of Crosner's ministry at the court of Dresden. He continued to preach before this duke during the space of three years. It may possibly assist the solution of this enigma, to consider—that George, though an incurable bigot, was yet by no means without CONSCIENCE; nor probably without some CURIOSITY and desire to know more distinctly the nature of those Protestant tenets, which, according to his ideas, had so much disturbed the peace of Germany; and lastly, that Crosner himself, in his sermons, may perhaps have industriously avoided the frequent discussion of such topics as are peculiarly offensive to a Papist. Indeed a very excellent judge makes no scruple to intimate, that there must have been, on the part of Crosner, some degree of dexterous trimming or political management, otherwise the Saxon duke would never have tolerated, for three years together, any direct and open attacks upon

* Com. de Luth. II. XIII.

the gross corruptions of the Romish religion*. Be this as it may, Crosner's situation at Dresden was certainly not to be envied. George was pleased and offended with him by turns. The preacher's own conscience was probably not very easy. Then the duke's courtiers wrested his expressions, and harassed him with perpetual accusations. It appears however clear, that Crosner on the whole must have been faithful; for he defended the cause of Christian truth with so much plainness and courage, —at least in the latter part of his residence at Dresden,—that he gave great offence at court, and was at length dismissed from his office. Emser, one of Luther's great adversaries, happening to be on horseback, and to pass close to Crosner as he was leaving the city, exclaimed, "This is to me a joyful day, that puts an end to the preachings of this heretic. Away with thee; and may some mischief overtake thee." "Emser," replied Crosner, "you ought to have said, Go in the name of the Lord." —It is affirmed by two very respectable authorities, that Emser died that very night in dreadful agonies†. After all, Crosner laboured so much under the imputation of having conducted himself with insincerity at the court of Dresden, that the elector of Saxony refused, upon a vacancy, to appoint him his domestic chaplain; and the poor man was reduced to so great indigence, that he petitioned that prince to place him in some lay-employment. The duke George, there is reason to believe, continued to see him occasionally, but it does not at all appear that he relieved his necessities‡.

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In regard to Luther, the affections of the duke were entirely alienated from him by those repeated asperities, with which both the public and private writings of the Reformer abounded, and which he

Luther affronts the duke of Saxony.

* Seck. II. Add. p. 93.

† Daniel Schneider, a minister at Dresden; and Selneccer. Vid. Seck. Index I. Crosnerus.

‡ Seck. II. 92. Add. II.

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took not the least pains to soften or conceal. In 1528, George, having received information that Luther, in one of his letters, had treated him with the utmost rudeness and contempt, suffered his spirit to be irritated beyond all bounds against the writer. The letter contained rash and intemperate expressions, no doubt; and George was in no humour to reflect that the harsh language, which gave him so much offence, had been used only in a private communication to a friend; and that Luther was not to blame, because his friend *, imprudently and without warrant, afterwards divulged it. The breach between them was wide enough before; but this accident seems to have rendered it incurable. A thousand times Luther had represented the duke as a violent headstrong bigot, but in this letter he had called him a fool.

Resentment of the duke George.

5. Visitation of the Electorate of Saxony.

In 1527, John, the good elector of Saxony, had ordered some steps to be taken towards a general visitation of all the churches under his jurisdiction, and, in the succeeding year, that important business was nearly brought to a conclusion. A directory for the use of the clergy of the electorate was composed by Melancthon, revised and corrected in some points by Luther, and lastly, published under the sanction of the prince himself. The instructions were digested under eighteen heads, with an admirable preface by Luther; in which he shows the great use of ecclesiastical visitations, confirms the practice from Scripture, and censures the neglect of the dignitaries of those times. Among the names of the visitors are mentioned Luther, Melancthon, Myconius, Justus Jonas, and Pomeranus, and also several laymen of less notoriety. These excellent

Instructions for the clergy of Saxony.

* Wenceslaus Lincius, Ep. II. 38.

commissioners fixed suitable pastors in the respective parishes; they abolished the ancient superstitions in the most lenient and gradual manner; and, in short, they gave every humane attention, consistent with their duty as visitors, to persons obstinately addicted to the forms of popery. Under their seventeenth article, the duty of a bishop is described; though the term superintendent was adopted. For example: Every superintendent was carefully to inspect the conduct of the clergy of his own diocese; to examine candidates for holy orders; to take care afterwards that they preached sound doctrine; also to admonish and censure defaulters, and if they proved incorrigible, to represent their obstinacy to the civil magistrate, or even to the prince himself*.

* Coll. de Luth. II. XXXVI.

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FROM THE VISITATION OF THE ELECTORATE OF SAXONY TO THE COMPARISON OF LUTHER AND ZUINGLE.

1. LUTHER'S SENTIMENTS ON OBEDIENCE TO MAGISTRATES.
2. HIS SENTIMENTS ON TOLERATION.
3. ZUINGLE'S SENTIMENTS ON THE SAME SUBJECTS.
4. SENTIMENTS OF LUTHER AND OF ZUINGLE ON PREDESTINATION.
5. CONFERENCES AT MARPURG.
6. PECULIAR OPINIONS OF ZUINGLE. HIS DREAM.
7. ZUINGLE AND LUTHER COMPARED.—WHICH WAS THE FIRST REFORMER?

1. OBEDIENCE TO MAGISTRATES.

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A. D. 1528.

Practical principles of Luther and his associates.

IN the course of the year 1528, several circumstances occurred, which cast much additional light on the real practical principles of the German Reformers.

The Protestants beheld all the motions of the Romanists with extreme jealousy, and had already concerted some measures for their own protection*. In moments of so much suspicion and fear, it was therefore natural that they should lend an ear to every story which was calculated to threaten and to alarm. Then it was affirmed, on very plausible evidence, that a number of the first potentates of

* Page. 144.

Germany, with Ferdinand at their head, had, some months ago, concluded a treaty at Breslaw, of which one great object was, by an allied army to compel the elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse to re-establish the ancient religious corruptions. Moreover, if the elector should refuse to give up Luther and his innovations, and if the landgrave also should persevere in his obstinacy, it was stipulated that the leaders of the confederacy should divide the possessions of the vanquished, and that the rest should be satisfied with pecuniary payments *.

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We leave it to the secular historians to develop the truth of this mysterious business, which had well nigh involved the states of Germany in all the horrors of a civil war. The historian of the Church of Christ is chiefly concerned in the part which the Reformers acted at such a crisis. Suffice it to say, that the mild and steady temper of JOHN THE CONSTANT gave way at length to the warmth and impetuosity of the landgrave; and the two princes agreed, in the former part of this year, to raise an army of twenty thousand foot and six thousand horse †. Almighty God, they said, had graciously bestowed on them and their subjects the rich gift of the Gospel; and they thought themselves bound to protect their religion, at the hazard of their dignity, their possessions, and their lives.

Alliance of the Elector and the Landgrave, A. D. 1528.

Suddenly, the powerful influence of Evangelical principles manifested itself at this juncture. The Wittemberg divines declared for pacific measures. Their leader Luther, with his associate Melancthon, wrote several letters to the elector, in which he confutes the reasoning of the landgrave, who had argued, that the steps already taken by their adversaries amounted to actual aggression. On the contrary, Luther contended, that their prince, the elector, ought to wait till some overt act of incon-

Sentiments of Luther respecting Obedience to Magistrates.

* Com. de Luth. II. XXXV. 3. † Ibid. 5.

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trovertible aggression should take place, or at least till the reports of an intended hostility were completely substantiated. As matters stood at present, the popish princes, though accused of having formed a conspiracy against their neighbours, positively denied the fact; and the imperial regency, which was a legal authority, had, by express mandate, ordered the Protestants to lay down their arms. "Here then," said Luther, "Providence affords an excellent opening for peace, which with a good conscience ye cannot reject; ye ought rather to dispatch a conciliatory and even submissive embassy to Ferdinand and the council of regency. It is true, the imperial order may probably have been obtained at the solicitation of your adversaries; nevertheless you ought to obey the supreme magistrates,—especially when they enjoin nothing but what appears just and laudable. To speak plain, I must repeat the protestation which I lately made before your highness at Altenburg; namely, that though it will give us the greatest pain to be separated from such a kind patron and parent as our prince, yet we must quit this part of the country, rather than be partakers of the infamy which will infallibly attach to your highness in the prosecution of unlawful hostilities; and, if I mistake not, many good men will follow our example. You had much better break the treaty you have made with the landgrave, than commence a war of this sort." Such is the substance of Luther's admirable advice and remonstrance on this occasion. The memoir is in his own hand-writing, subscribed also by Melancthon: and in a similar strain of freedom and sincerity, these excellent men opened their minds to John Frederic the son of the elector *.

All this is the more remarkable, because there is no doubt that secretly Luther was fully convinced the treaty of Breslaw was by no means a mere

* Seck. II. Add. 98—99.

fiction *; and Spalatinus, who had great opportunities of learning the interior counsels of several of the courts of Germany, has recorded his own opinion to the same effect †. The more accurately we scrutinize the practical notions of the Saxon reformers respecting obedience to the "powers that be," the preservation of peace, and the justification of war, the more shall we be satisfied that they were all entirely derived from the sacred oracles.

Conscientious mind of the elector John.

The tender conscience of the elector of Saxony was much affected by the arguments and suggestions of his Wittemberg theologians. Almost immediately he procured a modification of his late treaty with the landgrave, whereby it became purely a defensive treaty; and he also sent his son to the court of Hesse Cassel, to prevent the commencement of hostilities. The young prince, John Frederic, exhibited on this occasion a prudence not very common at his time of life. He said, "the circumstances called for a middle line of conduct. The friends of Evangelical doctrine ought by no means to break the peace; but they should ever preserve a watchful eye on their persecutors, and ever maintain a posture of defence." But it was no easy matter to restrain the juvenile ardour of the landgrave, and prevent him from marching his army into the possessions of his neighbours. At the head of his Hessian soldiers, he menaced his father-in-law, George of Saxony; and at the same time in excessively warm terms blamed the unseasonable moderation of the elector of Saxony, which in a great measure he imputed to Luther. The differences, however, for the present, were at length happily composed, and without bloodshed, through the mediation of the elector of Treves, and the elector Palatine.

* Com. de Luth. II. XXXV. 13. Also Ep. II. 379 & 387.

† Com. de Luth. II. XXXV. 17.

2. On Toleration.

Luther's sentiments on Toleration.

It was painful to the mind of Luther, as well as injurious to the cause of the Reformation, that after all that had been done to repress the fury of the Anabaptists, that fanatical sect continued to increase, and diffuse in all directions its contagious influence. Never was the grand maxim, that religious sentiments are not to be eradicated by persecution, more strikingly verified than in the conduct of these rebellious fanatics. Not only in Germany, but almost in every part of Europe, princes and magistrates used the utmost severity in punishing these sectarian teachers, and in preventing the dissemination of their tenets. In effect, all good governments had reason to dread the progress of the Anabaptists,—who taught the people to despise their lawful rulers, and the salutary regulations by which all communities exist. George of Saxony had alarmed his cousin, John the elector, by intimating the danger there was of new seditions in Thuringia. "The common people there," he said, "were expecting their REAL LORD AND MASTER to appear shortly in defence of his own Word and Gospel; and even in the alehouses talked of their hopes and prospects without disguise *." Every where it was the cry of these enthusiastic visionaries, —"No tribute—all things in common—no tithes—no magistrates—the kingdom of Christ is at hand; —the baptism of infants is an invention of the devil!"—These and many other extravagant notions †, the deluded zealots maintained with an unconquerable fortitude, worthy of a better cause. Neither the sword, nor fire, nor the gibbet, could induce them to recant.

Bad principles of the Anabaptists.

Notwithstanding the absurd principles and de-

* Seck. Addit. a. II. 97.

† Page 204.

testable practices of the German Anabaptists in the former part of the sixteenth century, we cannot doubt that of the vast multitudes included under that denomination, there must have been many persons of sincerely pious and pacific dispositions, though probably unlearned, and liable to be led away by impassioned enthusiasts or artful incendiaries. CENT. XVI.

Luther has left a brief, but important testimony to the character of some of these men. "Satan," says he, "rages: we have need of your prayers. The new Sectarians, called Anabaptists, increase in number; and display great external appearances of strictness of life, as also great boldness in death, whether they suffer by fire or by water*."

But as patience and courage in suffering persecution were looked on by the sound and judicious Protestants, as by no means constituting the only essential qualifications of a reformer, it was impossible that Luther and his associates should receive the Anabaptists as friends and partners in the great struggle for Christian truth and liberty. They detested their turbulence and sedition, while they pitied their folly and delusion, and their pretences to extraordinary sanctity. Meanwhile the Anabaptists themselves claimed a connexion or good understanding with the Lutherans, as often as it suited their purpose; and the Papists, either ignorantly, or through artifice, always represented Luther as the grand culprit; and the various sects as ramifications of his fundamental heresy. Discrimination was deemed needless, by men who considered all opposition or disobedience to the established hierarchy as the greatest of crimes, and were ready to punish the offenders with the most unrelenting barbarity.

In whatever way such wilful or careless misrepresentation of the facts might serve the purposes of error or iniquity, it behooved those who loved light

* To Sprenger. II. 366.

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rather than darkness, to exhibit themselves examples of godly truth and sincerity. And here the diligent student of the Reformation is presented with an excellent opportunity of narrowly inspecting both the principles and the practice of Luther. Balthazar Hubmeier had been an eloquent and useful preacher of the Gospel* in Suabia, till Munzer infected him and some others in Switzerland with his mischievous notions. From that time Balthazar became an active leader of the Anabaptists, raised disturbances in one place after another, till he was at length seized in Moravia, and suffered under papal cruelty in the flames at Vienna†. "I wish," says Zuingle, "speaking of this man, I may be deceived; but to me an immoderate thirst for praise and for money appear to be his sole motives‡."

Balthazar, to promote his own views, had represented, in a little publication, the sentiments of Luther as the same with his own. A calumny of that kind was not to be passed by in those circumstances without some notice. Luther published a brief reply, which consisted chiefly in an appeal to his own sermons, and to the well-known fact, that there was not a single Anabaptist to be found in all the electorate of Saxony.

At the same time, however, he took occasion to reprobate the cruel sufferings inflicted on the poor wretches by the persecutions of the ecclesiastical rulers; insisting with the utmost precision on that grand distinction of which this Reformer never lost sight,—that errors in articles of faith were not to be suppressed or extirpated by fire and sword, but confuted by the word of God: and that recourse ought never to be had to capital penalties, except in cases of actual sedition and tumult. The blindness

* Scult. p. 225. in XXIV.

† Ibid. in XXV. p. 262. Also Du Pin. II. 20. Com. de Luth. II. XL. 12.

‡ Letter to Peter Gynoræus. Op. Zuing. II. 115.

and darkness in which such men are often left, said Luther, are in themselves a sufficient punishment*. CENT. XVI.

The following declarations abundantly manifest the candid and enlightened spirit of this Reformer. Luther's reasons for leaving the communion.

"We differ from these fanatics, not merely in the article of baptism, but also in the general reason which they give for rejecting the baptism of infants. 'It was,' say they, 'a practice under the Papacy.' Thus, it was with them a sufficient reason for rejecting any thing,—that the Papists had adopted it. Now WE do not argue in that manner. We allow that in the Papacy are many good things; and all those good things we have retained. What we affirm is this; That the popes have in many instances corrupted the apostolick church; and have preferred their own laws and ordinances to the laws and ordinances of Christ. Therefore all that accumulated mass of human contrivances, which is of Satan's suggestion, and contributes to the destruction of the church of God, rather than to its edification, we entirely disapprove and reject. But then we stop here. We would not imitate the man, who on seeing his brother in the utmost danger of being killed by a wild boar, instantly pierced both the boar and his brother with one thrust of his spear. Perhaps some Papists will accuse me of flattering the pope in this instance: MY ANSWER is; If the pope will bear such flattery as this, I will become his obedient son; I will be a good papist, and will recant all that I have said to offend him†."

These sentiments are the more deserving of notice, because they have often been quoted IN A MUTILATED WAY by the adversaries of the Reformation, to show, that, from Luther's concessions it might be proved there existed no necessity of a separation from the church of Rome.—The fact is, the Protestants never denied that the foundations of

* Com. de Luth. II. XL. 12.

† Ibid. 13 and 14.

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the faith were to be found in the Romish church: but they complained of great errors and abuses, and of numerous superstitions; and as they could obtain no relief, they determined no longer to partake in the iniquity.

Additional proofs of Luther's sentiments on Toleration.

The judgment of Luther, on the subject of Religious Toleration, was called forth still more explicitly by the vexation, which the best Protestants of those times underwent from the practices of the fanatical sectarians, especially the Anabaptists.—His worthy friend, Lincus, probably in a state of irritation, had asked him, "Whether he conceived the magistrate to be justified in putting to death teachers of false religion;" a question, then little understood, and not generally agreed upon till long afterwards. "I am backward," replied Luther, "to pass a sentence of death, let the demerit be ☞ ever so apparent. For I am alarmed, when I reflect on the conduct of the Papists, who have so often abused the statutes of capital punishment against heresy, to the effusion of innocent blood. Among the Protestants, in process of time, I foresee a great probability of a similar abuse, if they should now arm the magistrate with the same powers, and there should be left on record a single instance of a person having suffered legally for the propagation of false doctrine. On this ground, I am decidedly against capital punishment in such cases, and think it quite sufficient that mischievous teachers of religion be removed from their situations*."

That Martin Luther in such an age, and in opposition to the habits of a popish education, could maintain these sentiments of justice and moderation, must be considered as an extraordinary instance of that liberal and magnanimous spirit, with which the Saxon Reformer was eminently endowed; and the judicious reader will not be disposed to think

* Ep. II. 381. b. See also his Letter to Jos. Metsch. Sup. Ep. 70.

worse of his practical conclusion in the matter of Toleration, because he was led to rest his argument on EXPERIENCE, rather than on visionary theories concerning the rights of private judgment. Where we are to look for examples of similar discrimination and freedom from party violence, under any circumstances resembling those in which Luther was placed, I know not: Certainly we shall have occasion to lament, in the progress of this history, that some other reformers, even of the most gentle and beneficent tempers, were of a very different opinion, deceived, no doubt, by the perversion of Old Testament precedents, which derived their force from the Jewish theocracy. CENT. XVI.

In the point of Consubstantiation, and in his refusal to hold an explicit fraternal communion with the Sacramentarians, Luther still persisted. Of his conduct in this respect, I pretend to give no satisfactory account. Let it be classed among the surprising inconsistencies which are to be observed in the history of human nature. Without doubt, it was in itself utterly indefensible, and also perfectly unlike what might have been expected from his general principles of toleration and facility in other articles, as well as from the uncommon sacrifices which he had made of a thousand prejudices of education, apparently much harder to be overcome than this. Obstinacy of Luther in the point of Consubstantiation.

Luther's uniform abhorrence of the inhumanity of consigning heretics to the sword or the flames, appears on many occasions; and this both directly and indirectly.—The following is an instance of the INDIRECT kind.—His extreme aversion to the Sacramentarians is not to be questioned; yet, when the elector of Saxony consulted him, respecting a soldier, who, in his cups, had maintained the opinion of Zuingle, and reviled the doctrine of Consubstantiation, he answered, "A man of this sort should be enjoined silence, rather than be permitted to His abhorrence of capital punishments in the case of heretics.

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mislead simple minds on a subject which he himself does not understand. But if he will continue to talk, let him procure information from the clergy: at all events, he must not be allowed to abuse the lawful ministers of the country*."

The DIRECT testimonies of Luther against the cruelty of persecutors are innumerable.—There is a remarkable one at the end of one of his little treatises on the Sacrament. "Were there no other reason," says he, "for leaving the communion of the church of Rome, this single one would be sufficient; —they shed innocent blood, contrary not only to the Divine, but even to the Pontifical law itself. They have no statute which makes it death to communicate in both kinds, yet they burn laymen who do so. They also burn their priests for marrying, when the penalty of their law is only degradation. I say then, THEY ARE MEN OF BLOOD; and if I were at present a member of their communion, their savage barbarity would induce me to leave them for ever, even though I had no other fault to find with them†."

3. ZUINGLE'S SENTIMENTS ON THE SAME SUBJECTS.

Zuingle's sentiments contrasted with Luther's.

ON the two great practical subjects, OBEDIENCE TO GOVERNORS and RELIGIOUS TOLERATION, there is so marked a difference between the sentiments of Luther and Zuingle, that it seems to be the duty of the historian to call the attention of his reader to certain facts which prove this point beyond all controversy. When the emperor, in the year 1530, threatened to re-establish the ancient Romish usages in some of the imperial cities, the ministers of Ulm and Memingen consulted the great Swiss reformer concerning the part which they ought to

A. D. 1530.

* Ex MS. in Seck. Index III. 1528. 28.

† Com. de Luth. II. XL. 10.

act, in case they should be driven to the last extremity.—"Stand firm," said Zuingle, "to the truth; and promise the emperor due obedience, provided he does not touch your religion. If he refuse those terms, then tell him how much you lament that he should be so ill-advised, as to suppose, that he possesses a power over your consciences; a power which no pious emperor ever did assume, nor any man could ever give; and that, therefore, there is nothing you will not hazard, rather than give way in this matter to any authority but the Word of God. A steady conduct alone, will extricate you from all your present difficulties. When the Papists shall see your resolute determination, I am confident they will not venture to employ force against you. They know very well, that if they go to war, their own possessions are liable to be plundered by the soldiers; and that after all, the event is doubtful. Besides, if the Romish hierarchy, nay, if any authority whatever, should begin to oppress the Gospel, and if we, through negligence, should submit to the encroachment, I maintain, that we are as guilty of denying the truth as the oppressors themselves. Already ye have gradually shaken off much of the Romish yoke; what folly then, now to submit, in spiritual things, to the emperor's authority, which is entirely derived from those very Papal pretensions which you have rejected!! These hints are not to be thrown out in public discourses, but are to be reserved for proper seasons. You may show this letter,—without name, however,—to such of the brethren as you can trust*."

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Zuingle advises to resist the Emperor.

His republican principles.

It may be unnecessary for the historian to add, how much all this savours of the republican.

The zeal and spirit of Zuingle is conspicuous in the peremptory advice he gives to his friends, to destroy, if possible, every vestige of the Romish superstitions. "The Papists," he said, "in some

His zeal and spirit.

* Op. Zuing. I. 413. b.

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places where the Gospel had been received, were endeavouring to support their falling cause by artifice. They at length showed a disposition to amend certain exceptionable ceremonies; but this fair outside concealed an insidious intention of restoring the ancient corrupt usages which had been so happily abolished, and the Protestants ought not to suffer themselves to be thus deceived. The Roman pontiff would never give up the hope of recovering his authority as long as the mass was celebrated, and there existed in the churches images to be worshipped, and while there could be found a perpetual succession of harlots and rascally monks * to sing psalms and hymns. A king, whose army has saved itself by flight, may easily repair the disaster, and return to the charge; cut his army to pieces, and there is an end of his hopes. Just so it is with the pontifical engines. Destroy them completely, and you destroy the pope's authority. Lose no time therefore; and do not wait to see what others do. Do not allow the Papists so much as to breathe, and recover from their consternation. Let your reasoning be simply as follows;—This building, this structure, is raised in opposition to our Lord Jesus Christ.—We will demolish it therefore.—But still take care, lest in your haste to pull down, ye do mischief by the fall. In regard to colleges and monasteries, I hold the same doctrine; that is, destroy every thing in them that is properly and strictly popish. Ye understand me sufficiently. I do not entirely agree with those who think cowls and images and such like things to be matters of indifference."

The mild conduct of Zuingle towards the Anabaptists, on their first rise.

Nothing, however, could be more truly christian than the conduct of Zuingle in the commencement of his disputes with the Anabaptists of Zurich, in the year 1525. Those artful proselytes of Munzer first in a clandestine manner insinuated to the minds

* "Scortis et monachis nebulonibus." Op. Zuing. I. 420.

of the people, that the Reformation, which had taken place among them through the instrumentality of Zuingle, was in its whole plan contracted and inefficient, and neither deep nor finished, nor sufficiently spiritual. After this, they addressed Zuingle himself in grave and imposing language, reproaching him with managing the business of religion in a slow and frigid manner; and, declaring, that now was the time for the real children of God to separate from the rest of their countrymen, as they did in the days of the Apostles: that the Spirit of God was at work, and unless men were more in earnest, there was no hope of their salvation: that the senate of Zurich were at present a motley assembly; but that a church, where all were pious members, would not fail to choose a pious senate. Zuingle replied to this statement in the kindest manner: "that there always would be a mixture of good and bad: that Christ had directed the tares and the wheat not to be separated till the time of harvest: that the example of the Apostles did not apply to the present times, when all men professed themselves to be Christians; whereas the secession of those days was that of believers from unbelievers: that a secession under the existing circumstances, he feared, would excite much disturbance; and, that as there was no necessity for so violent a measure, he could not look upon it as suggested by the Spirit of God. He added, that he was far from thinking so ill of the senate as they seemed to do; for that whatever defects they might have, they heartily favoured the Gospel of Christ. Lastly, he particularly recommended it to the consideration of persons who seemed to be aiming at a church of perfect purity, to reflect, that of the ten virgins who went to meet the bridegroom, only five were wise and provident*."

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* Op. Zuing. II. 7. b. and 57. Gerdes. I. 316.

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When these enthusiasts were no longer able to withstand the solid arguments of Zuingle, they began to unfold their designs more distinctly, by insisting on the necessity of adult baptism in all cases, and by establishing rebaptization as the criterion of the genuine members of the visible Church of Christ. The senate did their utmost to terminate the disputes; first, by procuring amicable conferences to be held between Zuingle on one side, and Manzius, an Anabaptist leader, on the other; and then by directing the parties to keep the peace. The Anabaptists declared they must obey God rather than men. Another fruitless conference took place; after which, the malcontents became furious and extravagant in the extreme. They flew to the city in vast swarms; abused Zuingle, calling him the Old Dragon, rebaptized the people in the streets, boasted of having all things in common, and threatened destruction to every one who refused to follow their example. They also prophesied—and cried, Woe to Zurich! Woe to Zurich! Repent, or perish! Some of them, like Jonas, allowed the city forty days for repentance; and now, instead of defending their doctrine from Scripture, they cried, they were ready to seal the truth with their own blood.

Violent proceedings of the Anabaptists.

In this prodigious agitation of men's minds, the senate proclaimed a freedom of public discussion, in consequence of which, every one had full leave to hear and be heard for three whole days together. Lastly, when this measure had failed to produce peace and tranquillity, Zuingle obtained permission to have, on November the 6th, A GENERAL and SOLEMN conference in the great church, where the points in dispute were again contested for the space of three days*. At length, a certain Anabaptist suddenly jumped up, and adjured Zuingle

* Op. Zuing. II. 8.

by the living God to own the truth; for the man had persuaded himself, that Zuingle, in secret favoured Anabaptism. Zuingle, with acuteness and promptitude, answered, I will; and I say then, YOU ARE THE RINGLEADER OF THE SEDITIOUS RUSTICS IN THIS DISTRICT.—Instantly there was a loud laugh, and the Anabaptist held his peace*. CENT. XVI.

After this CONFERENCE, the senate warned the people to desist from the practice of rebaptizing. But all was in vain.—They decreed therefore, that in future, all persons who professed Anabaptism, or harboured the professors of that doctrine, should be punished with death.

These things happened in 1525. Manzius, nevertheless, in defiance of the new law, and at the hazard of his life, ventured to rebaptize not a few within the jurisdiction of Zurich. He was apprehended by the order of the magistrates, and drowned in the river, on January the 5th, 1527. A little before his execution, he praised God that he was permitted to seal the truth by his death. He said, the death of the faithful was predicted by Christ. Both the mother and the brother of Manzius exhorted him to finish his course with firmness; and they had the satisfaction of hearing him sing with a loud voice, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit†." New law against rebaptizing, A. D. 1525. Manzius put to death at Zurich, A. D. 1527.

A very able and learned Protestant historian‡ of the Reformation informs us, that Manzius and his associate Grebel were both men of learning, who quarrelled with Zuingle about infant baptism; and moreover, that Manzius was drowned at Zurich, UPON THE SENTENCE PRONOUNCED BY ZUINGLE in these four words, Qui iterum mergit, mergatur; that is, He that rebaptizes with water, let him be

* Scultet. XXV. 257.

† Scultet. XXV. and XXVII. Dupin. II. XX. Gerdes. II. 336.

‡ Rev. Gerard Brandt, Professor of Divinity, and minister to the Protestant Remonstrants at Amsterdam, p. 57.

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drowned in the water. It is a lamentable truth, that more tragedies of this kind were performed about the same time, which provoked the memorialists of those days, to exclaim, "This procedure is very strange: the Zuinglians themselves are scarce out of the reach of persecutors; the fires in which their fellow-believers were burnt, are still daily smoking. Most of them condemned the putting of heretics to death where it came home to themselves, and actually suffered death when they could not help it; and yet they practise the very same cruelties as soon as they are become uppermost. Thus do they do to others what they would not have done to themselves. OTHERS employed FIRE; THEY employ WATER. Those that knew better things, ought to have done better: neither were they actuated by a good spirit, that could lead the wanderer into the ditch, instead of setting him in the right way; that could drown the infected, instead of washing and cleansing him; or could burn the blind, instead of restoring him to the light*."

Query whether Zuingle approved of punishing the Anabaptists with death.

Expostulations of this kind will not fail, in our days at least, to affect every heart with a mixture of pain and indignation, and we may add, of anxiety also, to know whether such a character as Zuingle was really involved in the perpetration of such barbarities.

1. This Reformer owns, that he was calumniated by the Anabaptists, as being the cause why the senate of Zurich had proscribed and banished them from the whole Canton. At the same time he appeals to his accusers themselves, whether in their own presence he had not entreated the magistrates not to pass any severe edicts against them†.

This positive testimony of a conscientious Christian, had almost convinced me that the historian, Brandt, above-mentioned, had been deceived by the want of discrimination in the Dutch authors whom

* Brandt, p. 57. † Zuing. de Bapt. 57.

he follows, till further reflection and a nicer scrutiny into the dates of the several transactions, and also a comparison of different parts of the writings of Zuingle, removed the doubts in the following satisfactory manner. CENT. XVI.

2. Every person conversant in the Swiss history of those times, must be aware of the entire ascendant which Zuingle had then obtained over the magistrates of Zurich in ecclesiastical concerns. Absolutely unbounded were their love and admiration of their countryman, to whose wisdom and courage they were so much indebted for Christian liberty: and there is no doubt, that, in general, he well deserved all their confidence and best affections. This circumstance therefore renders it à priori very improbable, that the senate, in the exercise of their ecclesiastical jurisdiction, should agree to inflict the barbarous penalty of death upon any species of heretics, not only without his concurrence in so strong a measure, but even contrary to his judgment and wishes.

Still, this is but conjecture, against the positive declaration of Zuingle,—that he pressed the senate to be gentle with the Anabaptists.

3. Let us then attend to the manner in which this eminent Reformer himself, without the least disguise or hesitation, recounts the circumstances under which the senate of Zurich decreed the penalty in question.

Speaking of the solemn conference, mentioned in p. 506, he says, "AFTER THAT CONFERENCE, which was indeed the tenth, besides many others, both public and private, our very RENOWNED senate decreed, that, 'whoever should rebaptize any person, should himself be drowned in water.'" "I may perhaps tire you, good reader," continues he, "with this long account; but I am not influenced by heat or party spirit, or any other motive

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than that of a faithful vigilance and solicitude for the churches. Many of our brethren, before they knew what sort of men we had to do with, were disposed to think they had been treated inhumanly throughout; but now, since their own congregations have suffered devastations from the same people, they own that all they had heard of them, was very much short of the truth.---- Indeed, I believe the whole world never before experienced a hypocrisy of this sort*." Now,

Is it possible that Zuingle should have expressed himself in this manner, concerning the senate of Zurich, and their inhuman treatment of the unhappy enthusiastic Anabaptists, unless he had been actually approving, consenting to, and probably recommending that cruel edict, which all the enlightened members of the Church of Christ must for ever condemn! Further, be it observed that,

4. The SOLEMN CONFERENCE of the contending parties, which was soon followed by this violent decree of the senate, commenced on the sixth of November, 1525†. Whereas it was in the former part of the same year, that the Swiss Reformer pleaded with the magistrates in favour of the Anabaptists‡. And then,

With these facts in view, the discerning reader will have no difficulty in drawing for himself the just inferences. He will see, that between the month of May, and the conclusion of the conference in the succeeding November, the Anabaptists became so abominably outrageous, that the patience of Zuingle was absolutely exhausted; and that, therefore, there is in the accounts, no inconsistency

* Zuing. Elench. contra Catab. p. 8.

† Scultet. XXV. 257.

‡ Zuingle's treatise de Baptismo, in which he says, he entreated the magistrates not to pass any severe edict against the Anabaptists, was written in May 1525.

which either can at all impeach the veracity of the Reformer, or materially* affect the accuracy of the Dutch historian.—For the honour of the Reformation, I would it were in my power to clear the memory of the former from the imputation of an intolerant spirit, which led that great man to approve of capital punishments for no other offence, except the mere act of rebaptization!!

In estimating, however, both the magnitude and the number of the persecutions which the Anabaptists of those times underwent, great care is required, not to confound the punishments inflicted on such as were proved guilty of tumult and sedition with the severe hardships and heavy penalties, which many of them certainly suffered on account of harmless practices, or even mere errors of judgment in articles of faith.

The several edicts of the senate of Zurich, issued during the rise of the Anabaptists, sufficiently manifest the spirit of those legislators. By the first, a penalty of two guilders was set upon all such as should suffer themselves to be rebaptized, or should withhold baptism from their children;—and it was further declared, that those who opposed this order, should be yet more severely treated†. By the second we have seen‡, the punishment of Anabaptism was made capital.

Erasmus's account of the persecutions of the Anabaptists.

Erasmus, who always discovers a malignant satisfaction in exposing the faults of the Reformers, brings forward these cruelties of the Zuinglians in one of his slanderous apologies, which has already been noticed§. "The Reformers," says he, "show a most wonderful zeal against punishing heretics with death; whereas they themselves inflict capital punishment on the Anabaptists; a people against

* I say, materially, because it was scarcely accurate to represent Zuingle as pronouncing the sentence of death upon Manzius.

† Brandt, p. 57. ‡ Page 507. § See page 341.

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whom there is little to be said; and concerning whom we are assured there are many who have been reformed from the worst to the very best lives; and though they may foolishly err in certain opinions, yet they have never stormed towns nor churches, nor entered into any combinations against their governors*. I may add further, that they bring better scriptural proofs in support of their doctrine, than those do, who argue that the words, 'this is my body,' mean 'this signifies my body'†."

There is no denying, that at Basil also, the followers of Zuingle exercised a considerable degree of the same sort of intolerance against those who dissented from them in mere non-essentials. Alluding to this, Erasmus, with great triumph, asks, "Whether it is not compulsion, to oblige every one to pay a florin, who dares to receive the Sacrament in the neighbouring villages; or to threaten with the condemnation of the senate, all those who do not on Easter-day repair to the minister to receive mere bread and wine, instead of the body of Christ?" In another place, he says, "At Basil they disclaim all compulsion, yet the receiving of the Lord's Supper any where, except as the magistrates direct, is punished with a penalty of one pound for the first offence, two for the second, four for the third, and banishment for the fourth‡." He also intimates, that Balthazar Hubmeier was imprisoned six months at Zurich, through the cruel influence of Zuingle; and at last got free, only by making his escape §.

* What extraordinary lengths did his dislike of the Reformers carry Erasmus! He knew very well the seditious character of the Anabaptists in general; yet how artfully does he here apologize for them, directing at the same time an ill-natured stroke against the Reformers, for putting themselves in a state of defence against their persecutors!

† 1592, ad Frat. Germ. ‡ Ep. p. 1453. § Op. X. 1602.

These and similar examples of persecution, to be found in the practice of some of the very best Reformers, are the more to be lamented, because they sometimes prove a stumbling-block to weaker minds, and always afford matter for triumph to profane unbelievers. However, as the unbending laws of historical veracity forbid the writer to suppress such things, he ventures to admonish his pious readers to extract profit from the reflections which are suggested by these sad proofs of human blindness and imperfection. CENT. XVI. Reflections on these Persecutions.

1. How slow are we all to imitate our great Exemplar, who in the most trying moments cried out, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!!"

2. How dangerous is a spirit of contention, of opposition, of vengeance! And how often,—were it in our power,—should we be disposed to call down fire from heaven, as Elias did!

3. How watchful over the growth of bad tempers ought we to be in the very beginnings of all religious controversies!

4. Then in the progress of them, how does it become us to pause often and examine ourselves, lest we should suppose we are doing God service, when in reality we are impelled only by heat, animosity, and a desire of victory.

5. Lastly, when there really happens to exist in our motives some little good, are we not extremely apt to magnify it, till the fancied picture completely veils from our eyes that large admixture of evil, which on the whole miserably predominates. And is not this a fruitful source of deception?

But it is not the suggestion of general maxims, however important, which I had merely in view, in contrasting together the principles and practices of Martin Luther and Ulrick Zuingle.—The learned translator of Mosheim has enhanced the reputation of the latter, and very much at the expense of the

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Prejudices of Dr. Maclaine and Mr. Roscoe.

former, in a manner which history by no means appears to me to justify. Other writers have not only implicitly followed Dr. Maclaine, but even gone much farther in decrying Luther, till at length a late elegant biographer has ventured to affirm, that this celebrated Reformer had no sooner "freed his followers from the chains of papal domination, than he forged others, in many respects equally intolerable;" and also, "that although he was ready on all occasions to make use of arguments from Scripture for the defence of his tenets, yet, when these proved insufficient, he SELDOM HESITATED to resort to more violent measures *."

Now as differences of opinions on momentous historical subjects are ever to be settled by a patient study and comparison of the original documents, rather than by hastily copying the prejudices of successive writers, it will, if I mistake not, be found that this history of the Reformation contains many important facts faithfully recorded, but not generally known, upon which the real character of Luther, Carolstadt, Zuingle, and others, must ultimately depend.

4. PREDESTINATION.

The erroneous notion of many persons respecting Predestination.

IT is a common, at the same time an erroneous notion, that the difference of the sentiments of Luther from those of all that class of Protestants on the Continent, who had no connexion with HIS churches, lay very much in the article of PREDESTINATION †. There is a two-fold mistake in this position, originating, I conceive, in an inattention to those variations of doctrine, which in the subsequent periods of the history of the Reformation, took place both in the Lutheran and the other churches that separated themselves from the Romish

* Roscoe's Leo X. vol. IV. p. 48 & 49—51.

† The Lutherans are supposed to have been Anti-Calvinistic.

communion. Certainly the Lutheran churches by degrees became more Arminian, and, in general, the rest of the Protestant churches more Calvinistic afterwards; but in truth, Consubstantiation was the single point in the early part of the Reformation, on which the unhappy separation almost entirely turned; and the consequences of this schism deserve to be noticed by pious Reformers in all ages, as a warning to bury in silence their unimportant disagreements, rather than to perpetuate them by a formal and explicit contention. CENT. XVI.

Ulrick Zuingle was the founder of those reformed churches, which held no communion with the Lutherans; and on a careful perusal of his voluminous writings, I am convinced, that certain peculiar sentiments*, afterwards maintained by Calvin, concerning the absolute decrees of God, made no part of the theology of the Swiss Reformer; and this observation may serve to correct one part of the twofold mistake above mentioned.—The other part will be done away effectually in the mind of every one who seriously attends to Luther's answer to the Diatribe of Erasmus. And thus it appears, not only that the lamentable rupture among the first Reformers was not occasioned by disputes concerning Predestination, but also, that if it had been so, the sentiments of the contending parties were really the reverse of what they are commonly supposed to be.

Nevertheless, the Saxon theologian, though he denied, as we have repeatedly seen, the existence of all human ability to save a lost sinner, as also the inefficacy of all human qualifications to merit reward; and though he ascribed salvation to grace alone, and to the merciful will of God, yet on the delicate question of Predestination, ever displayed that moderation by which his mind was uniformly

* This subject may be examined more accurately in the sequel of this History.

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influenced in all doctrinal inquiries EXCEPT ONE*; and, content with what Scripture had revealed, he never undertook to explain this difficult subject with any thing like a systematic precision; much less did he ever think proper to propose the arduous speculations concerning the Divine decrees as necessary articles of a Christian's faith.

It happened, however, that a neighbouring minister, with the view of comforting one of his flock, whose mind was much distressed respecting the secret counsels of God, was desirous of obtaining from Luther more satisfaction on this head than could be collected from his publications. This circumstance gave to our Reformer the occasion of writing an epistle, the substance of which will be allowed by all sincere Protestants to be well adapted to the purpose for which it was composed; and as a curious and inquisitive spirit of prying into the inscrutable mysteries of the Divine will, is but too often indulged by many serious persons, the perusal of a few quotations from Luther's advice may prove edifying to some Evangelical readers.

Luther's thoughts on Predestination.

"Many have perished in the indulgence of such curious inquiries; it is a temptation, which leads even to blasphemy. I myself, by giving way to it, have more than once been reduced to the last extremity. We, poor mortals, by faith can scarcely comprehend a few rays of the Divine promise, or receive in practice a few sparks of the Divine precepts; and yet, feeble and impure as we are, we rashly attempt to fathom the majesty of God in all its brightness. Do we not know that his ways are past finding out? Instead of using well the mild light of the promises which is adapted to our faculties, we rush with eyes of moles, to view at once the majestic splendour of the Deity. What wonder then, if his glory should overwhelm us in the attempt to investigate it! We ought to know that there is such

* Consubstantiation.

a thing as the secret will of God: but the danger is when we attempt to comprehend it.—I am wont to check myself with that answer of Christ to Peter, who had asked what was to become of John;—'What is that to thee? follow thou me.' But suppose we could give an accurate account of the judgments of Almighty God in his secret determinations: What advantage would accrue to us from such knowledge, beyond what lies open to us from the promises and the precepts,—from the former addressed to our faith,—from the latter to our practice? Tell your friend, if he would have peace of mind, to abstain from such intricate speculations. The subject is incomprehensible, and the study of it may drive him to despair and blasphemy.—Let him not give way to Satan, who would weary him out, by presenting impossibilities to his mind. Let him exercise faith in the promises, and obey the commandments; and when he has discharged those duties well, he will be able to judge whether he will have any time left for impossibilities. There is no other remedy than to neglect, and not give way to such thoughts; though this is a difficult task, because Satan suggests the absolute necessity of attending to them. This battle however must be fought; and many persons fail in the contest by not suspecting their thoughts to be the temptations of Satan; whereas, these are the very fiery darts of THAT WICKED ONE. He himself fell from heaven by aiming at a knowledge above his station. Thus also he vanquished Adam, by teaching him to be dissatisfied with his ignorance concerning the will of God. Flight is the true wisdom here; there is no room for Christ to dwell in the heart, as long as reasonings of this kind are uppermost*." In another letter, while he admits the preordination and foreknowledge of God, nevertheless, from Ezek. xviii. 23, "If ve I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God," he argues, that CENT. XVI.

* Ad. Caspar Aq. II. 392. b.

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God chose, and seriously decreed from eternity, the possibility of the salvation and everlasting happiness of all men. And hence he concludes that the general promises of a gracious God, ought by no means to be limited; nor those suggestions of Satan to be indulged, which would separate us from the Divine mercy, which is represented in Scripture as infinite. He then refers the afflicted penitent to the voice of God himself, "This is my beloved Son, hear him;" and to the words of Christ, proclaiming in the streets, "Come unto me, all ye that labour." He invites all, even the very worst, as publicans and harlots. Why should we perplex ourselves with difficult, and circuitous roads, when the direct road is so clearly pointed out to us in the Gospel*.

5. Conferences at Marpurg.

It is a very just observation of Father Paul†, that "in the cause of religion every subdivision is a strong weapon in the hand of the enemy." The zealous landgrave of Hesse was so sensible of the importance of this maxim, that he spared no pains to unite the Lutheran and Zuinglian Protestants, and make them act in concert against the common enemy. In effect, the unhappy disagreement of these sects, was not only injurious to the Reformation in general, but also thwarted very much the military views of this active and magnanimous prince.

Proposals of the Landgrave.

For the purpose of promoting so desirable an union, the landgrave, in the year 1529, proposed a friendly conference to be held at Marpurg between the heads of the two denominations. Thither repaired, on the one side, Luther and Melancthon, on the other, Zuingle and Ecolampadius, together with several others, their friends respectively, and men of great note. It is unnecessary to detail the particulars of the conferences, which lasted several

* Com. de Luth. II. XLIII. 3—5. Also Ep. II. 382.
† Council of Trent, 46.

days. Suffice it to say, they ended rather according to what might have been expected, than according to the Christian wishes of the good landgrave of Hesse. It was not probable that either Zuingle or Luther, in a public disputation on the nature of the presence of Christ in the Sacrament, should retract the sentiments which he had long defended, and against which he would hear no argument advanced, but what he had already repeatedly heard, well considered, and, in his own judgment, satisfactorily answered. To this we may add the suggestions of Father Paul* on this very occasion, "That the controversy having proceeded so far, it seemed as though the honour of the leaders were in question; and also, that IN VERBAL CONTENTIONS THE SMALLNESS OF THE DIFFERENCE OFTEN NOURISHES THE OBSTINACY OF THE PARTIES." It appears that Luther, conscious of his own positive determination not to give way one hair's breadth on the point of Consubstantiation, and also well aware of the steady character of the Swiss Reformer, from the first clearly foresaw the event of the debates at Marpurg, and was induced to go there, only or chiefly, lest the adverse party should have to boast that they were more disposed than himself to adopt measures of peace and concord†. The narratives of the party-historians concerning this business contain many bitter things, which are best passed over, especially as the sincerity of the motives of the controversialists cannot reasonably be doubted. We are bound however to mark with the most entire disapprobation that unchristian stubbornness of temper which manifested itself in Luther at the conclusion of the conferences. The Sacramentarians, as they were called, begged hard to be acknowledged as brethren. They even went so far, as to own

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* 1. 109. p. 46.

† Luth. ad Landgrav. IV. Jen. 466. in Hosp. 73. Vid. Supp. Ep. Luth. p. 67.

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repeatedly, that the body of Christ was verily present in the Lord's Supper, though in a spiritual manner; and Zuingle himself, in pressing for mutual fraternity, declared with tears *, that there were no men in the world with whom he more earnestly wished to agree, than with the Wittemberg divines. Even the landgrave personally exerted himself, with all his might, to produce a cordial friendship. But the spirit of Luther proved perfectly untractable and intolerant. Nothing more could be gained from him, than that each side should show Christian charity to the other as far as they could conscientiously; and that both should diligently pray God to lead them into the truth. To go farther, Luther maintained, was impossible; and expressed astonishment, that the Swiss divines could look upon himself as a Christian brother, when they did not believe his doctrine to be true †. In such circumstances, however, though there could be no such thing as fraternal union, the parties, he allowed, might preserve a friendly sort of peace and concord; might do good turns to each other, and abstain from harsh and acrimonious language ‡.

The papal advocates, either through ignorance or design, represent Luther's opposition to the Sacramentarians as founded in political reasons §. Little need is there, by the addition of imaginary accusations, to aggravate the blameable conduct of our Reformer in the discussions respecting Consubstantiation. His reputation for sincerity in every part of his belief, is as completely unsullied as his pertinacity in the support of this particular article is altogether indefensible: and it is scarcely necessary to add, that mere human policy must have determined him to pursue measures the reverse of those which he actually adopted. To have been rein-

* Hosp. 82. b. Supp. Luth. Ep. 103. I. Cœlest. 54.
† Scult. XXIX. 203.
‡ Joan. Agric. Supp. Ep. 71. Com. de Luth. II. XLVII. 7.
§ Pallav. 3. I. 6.

forced by the whole body of the Zuinglian Protestants, would have proved at that time to the Lutherans a most important accession of strength, and was an event very much dreaded by the Romanists. CENT. XVI.

In regard to Zuingle and his associates, it is by no means clear, that their excessive desire to be on good terms with the Lutherans, did not carry them a little too far in the concessions which they made at the conferences of Marpurg. It is true, that soon after those conferences, both sides published their own accounts of what had passed, and boasted that they had gotten the better in the combat*: However, as certain articles had been drawn up, and actually signed by Luther, Melancthon, Jonas, &c. on one side, and by Zuingle, Ecolampadius, Bucer, &c. on the other, this authentic record is a very useful document to the curious inquirer, who wishes to determine how far in fact each party strictly adhered to their real sentiments. Concessions of the Zuinglians.

Melancthon's account is, that Zuingle readily gave up several things which he had advanced in his writings, particularly his notion of original sin; and that he came over to the Wittemberg divines in all points, the single article of the Lord's Supper excepted†.

Luther, on his return home from Marpurg, expresses himself much pleased with the moderation of the Zuinglians, and their disposition to concede. From what had passed, however, he judged, that, besides the question on the Lord's Supper, there was not a perfect agreement in the article of Original Sin. In fact, the fourth article of the Marpurg concord, which treats of this doctrine‡, is penned with some ambiguity; and in such matters Luther's eye was infinitely more penetrating than Melancthon's§.

Bucer acknowledges, that as there was a definitive

* Du Pin, II. XXI.
† Melan. in Scult. 191. in Hosp. 80—82.
‡ Scult. 230. § Com. de Luth. II. XLVII. 7.

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disagreement between the parties respecting the sacrament, himself and his friends, from a desire of peace and harmony, had been induced to sign the other articles, though they were not expressed with that precision with which they would have been, if the Helvetian theologians had drawn up their own creed *.

Lastly, a modern author, though strongly prejudiced on the side of the Sacramentarians, owns that the Marpurg articles of concord are conceived in such terms as neither Zuingle nor Ecolampadius had ever used before; and that that circumstance leads to a belief, that Zuingle and Ecolampadius did not adhere to their former sentiments. He then proceeds to say, that "these divines, with the view of uniting the Protestants, agreed to sign a formulary, which, according to their own way of interpreting the meaning of words, did not contradict their real sentiments, but which, however, in fact was entirely the creed of Luther. The motive was good, but full of danger.——Luther was more politic than he appeared to be †."

Without pretending to determine which side of the two was more politic, I may now safely leave it to the diligent student of Ecclesiastical history, to reflect on the evidence before him, and determine for himself, which was more HONEST and SINCERE.

6. PECULIAR OPINIONS OF ZUINGLE.

IN this place it may not be improper to mention briefly some of the peculiar opinions of the great Swiss Reformer.

Melancthon's account of Zuingle's Confession of Faith.

In less than a twelvemonth after the conferences at Marpurg, Melancthon, in the year 1530, then present at the memorable diet of Augsburg, wrote to Luther in substance as follows: "Zuingle has sent hither, in print, his Confession of Faith. You

* Hosp. 85. † Beausobre IV.

would say neither more nor less, than that he is not in his senses. On original sin and the use of the sacraments, he clearly revives his old errors. On the nature of ceremonies he talks like a Swiss; that is, most barbarously. At one stroke he would abolish all ceremonies; and he would have no bishops: then he presses most vehemently to obtain his favourite article on the Lord's Supper*." CENT. XVI.

Let us now turn to that Confession itself of Zuingle, which called forth this harsh censure from the mild, pacific, candid Melancthon†. Zuingle's own account.

1. On ORIGINAL sin, he speaks to this effect:" Sin is properly transgression of a law; and "where there is no law there is no transgression." Our great ancestor sinned; but WHICH OF US meddled with the forbidden fruit? There is then no denying that original sin, as it exists in us the descendants of Adam, is NOT PROPERLY SIN. It is a disease; it is a condition. It may be called sin, but it is not so in strictness of speech. Thus a perfidious enemy when taken in war may DESERVE to be made a slave. His children also become slaves, but the fault was in the father. The children are not to blame; yet they suffer for the sin of their father; and if you choose to denominate their state of slavery SIN, because by sin they were brought into that state, I shall not object. It is, however, in this sense that we are by nature the children of wrath.

2. The SACRAMENTS, he affirms, do not confer grace, but are public testimonies given to the Church of the previous existence of grace.

3. He allows, that such CEREMONIES as are not founded in superstition, nor are contrary to the word of God, may be tolerated, till the Day-star shall become more and more bright‡; but that even these had better be abolished, provided it can be done without giving great offence.

* Sup. Ep. 61. 191—193. Cœlest. II. 288.

† Op. Zuing. II. 539. ‡ 2 Pet.

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4. He grants there ought to be MINISTERS of the word, to instruct the people, and to comfort and to alarm them, also to baptize, and to celebrate the Lord's Supper; but as to the whole tribe of mitred bishops, he looks on them as born to consume the fruits of the earth; and to be in the Church of Christ, precisely what wens and swellings are in the human body.

5. Zuingle's ideas concerning princes and magistrates merit peculiar attention. They are to be obeyed, says he, when they discharge their offices with wisdom and justice. But should they abuse their authority, in that case, if the tyrant was legally appointed, the Christian must obey him till he has an opportunity of putting in practice St. Paul's rule, "If thou mayest be free, use it rather*." The opportunity however should, I think, be clearly pointed out by God, and not by man; as clearly, for example, as when Saul was rejected to give place to David†.

Not only in his Confession of Faith, but throughout the voluminous writings of Zuingle, we meet with many bold and novel thoughts. An instance or two, while they amuse the modest student of the Scriptures, may possibly suggest some useful reflections.

1. In a little tract on the doctrine of original sin, he produces a passage from an epistle of Seneca to Lucilius, in which the philosopher maintains, that we ought to live as if men could see our most secret thoughts; for what use is there in hiding any thing from our fellow-creatures, when God is always in the midst of our meditations? Zuingle on this occasion calls SENECA A MOST HOLY MAN; and hesitates

* 1 Cor. vii. 21. The reader will probably think this to be a strange use made of St. Paul's direction in this chapter.

† Query: whether, according to these ideas, men may not sometimes conclude that Providence points out the proper opportunity for resistance, when their chief reason for thinking so is, that they believe themselves likely to succeed in the attempt?

not to conclude, that he was in possession of saving faith. CENT. XVI.

Now, though various doubts, hopes, and wishes, attended even with some anxieties and perturbations of mind, may often have affected many persons in contemplating cases of this kind; yet the wisest and best Christians have always, I think, judged it most safe to adhere to the written word, and obey the remarkable injunction, "What is that to thee? follow thou me."

In Zuingle's Exposition of his Faith, addressed to Francis I. the king of France, I find a much more extraordinary paragraph.

Peculiar sentiments of Zuingle.

After expressing his belief in general, that all faithful souls, when they leave the body, will be joined to the Deity, and enjoy him for ever: he addresses Francis as a most PIOUS KING, assuring him, that if he governs his kingdom as David, Hezekiah and Josiah did, he may hope to see the Deity in perfection, and enjoy him for ever. Then he may hope also to see, and join the assembly of all holy, wise, faithful, brave, virtuous men that ever lived since the world began; and among these, the two Adams, the Redeemed, and the Redeemer, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Isaiah, the Virgin Mary, David, John the Baptist, Peter and Paul;—Likewise, Hercules, Theseus, Socrates, Aristides, Antigonus, Numa, Camillus, the Catos, and the Scipios*;—his own predecessors, and as many of his ancestors as have departed in the faith. Lastly, there will not have been a good man, or a faithful soul, from the beginning of the world to its end, whom, together with God himself, he will not see in Heaven. Is it possible, says Zuingle, to imagine a spectacle more

* This is not the only place in which Zuingle speaks in this manner of some of the celebrated heathen characters. "Both the Catos," says he, "and Camillus, and Scipio, would never have been magnanimous, had they not been religious."—Epist. Zuing. and Œcol. I. 9.

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delightful, or more honourable? He then adds these very memorable words—While in the mean time, the dreaming * Anabaptists may sleep in Hell, that sleep which they deserve, and from their sleep may never more awake† !

The pen drops from one's hand in writing such a sentence as this. I shall therefore content myself with laying before the reader the original words: "Cum interim somniantes Catabaptistæ merito somnum dormiant apud inferos, à quo nunquàm expergefiant," and barely take notice, that most probably the latter part of the sentence ought to be translated so as to imply a wish, "that they may never more awake," which makes the sentiment still more exceptionable, and unchristian.

There is a remarkable passage in one of Zuingle's treatises on the Eucharist, which, as it helps to illustrate both the character and the sentiments of this illustrious Reformer, must not be omitted.

Zuingle's Dream.

In the year 1525, when the great question concerning the abolition of the Romish mass was agitated at Zurich in full senate, and in the presence of the Protestant divines, a certain clerk or scribe rose up, and opposed Zuingle with all his might. The senate however were convinced by the arguments of Zuingle and his associates; and they decreed, that in future the Lord's Supper should be administered agreeably to Christ's own institution. In the morning of the following day, Zuingle had a dream, which he relates in these terms. "I tell the truth, and moreover, what I have to tell is so true, that my conscience compels me, against my will, to reveal what the Lord has bestowed upon me; for I am well aware to what jests and insults I shall hereby expose myself. I say then, that at

* Zuingle here alludes to the opinion entertained by the Anabaptists of those days, viz. that departed souls sleep till the resurrection. See his Sermon, II. 534. b.

† Op. II. 559. Also Moreri Supp. En. Zuingle.

break of day, in a dream, I appeared to myself to have a tedious debate with my adversary THE SCRIBE; and at length to have become so completely tongue-tied, as to have lost the power of saying what I knew to be true. This inability seemed to distress me exceedingly, as delusive dreams in the night sometimes do:—for still, as far as I am concerned, I relate but a mere dream, although it is by no means a light matter which I have learnt by this dream,—thanks be to God, for whose glory alone I reveal these things. In this situation, suddenly an adviser seemed to be present with me,—whether he was white or black, I have no distinct recollection, for I am telling only my dream;—who said, You stupid man, why do not you answer him from the twelfth of Exodus, as it is there written, 'It is the Lord's passover*.' Instantly upon this suggestion in my sleep, I awoke and leaped from my bed; looked carefully at the passage in the Septuagint, and argued from it in my next sermon with all my power. The effect was, that all those who earnestly wished to understand their Bibles had no longer any doubts concerning the meaning of our Lord's words, 'This is my body,' in his institution of the Sacrament." CENT. XVI.

Zuingle then proceeds to compare the Jewish passover, as directed in the Old Testament, with the Lord's Supper, as commanded by Christ himself in the New. With great perspicuity he points out the analogy between the two expressions, "It is the Lord's passover," and "This is my body;" and powerfully contends, that as the former must necessarily be taken figuratively, the latter cannot possibly be construed otherwise†.

7. ZUINGLE AND LUTHER COMPARED.

THE two grand instruments of the Reformation on the Continent, during the period which we are Comparison of Zuingle and Luther.

* Exod. xii. 11.

† Subsid. Euch. II. 249. Also Melch. Adam. in Zuin. 20.

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now reviewing, were undoubtedly Zuingle and Luther; and the pious student of their history has now before him, I conceive, sufficient materials, whereby to judge for himself of their integrity, their talents, and their DEFECTS. On the authority of the learned translator of Mosheim, I had imagined for many years that Zuingle, "instead of receiving instructions from Luther, was much his superior in learning, capacity, and judgment, and much fitter to be his master than his disciple*." Beausobre, I own, was the first who induced me to suspect this representation; not, however, by opposing the sentiments of Maclaine, but by supporting them with numerous instances of blind partiality towards Zuingle, and not a few of most uncandid and even abusive censure of Luther†. To point out simply the prepossessions of historians who have so many opportunities of directing the sentiments of mankind, must be deemed a just and commendable precaution for the protection of truth; but to aim at conjectures respecting the causes of their prepossessions may seem invidious and unnecessary. On historical questions, however, where pure religion is concerned, one may be allowed, perhaps, to make general observations of great practical consequence; such, as,

Beausobre's Prejudices.

* Dr. Maclaine, in Mosh. XVI. I. p. 26, the Notes.

† Beaus. IIII. 138, & 190 to 194.—The learned reader, who is well versed in the writings of the Sacramentarian controversialists, will perceive abundance of partiality in the pages here quoted. In particular, he will not approve of Luther being represented, p. 193, as saying, "The Switzers revoke ALL, but as for me, I revoke nothing," with a reference to a note where this is an extract of merely three words from his letter, "Nos nihil revocavimus;" when in fact, the context of the letter shows, that he directs his friend to the Marpurg articles themselves, where he might see how far the recantation had actually proceeded. Then in page 190, there is a still much more unjustifiable attack upon Luther, grounded upon a perverted interpretation of a certain passage in his letter, which passage, after all, is not found in the most authentic copies of that letter. Vid. Hosp. II. 82. Supp. Ep. Luth. 103. Cœlest. 54.

1st, That men of LITTLE or NO RELIGION rarely, or never, judge fairly on such questions; and therefore a believer is not to expect an equitable sentence from infidels, sceptics, or atheists: And 2dly, That persons who profess some sort of belief in the Gospel, and have yet very erroneous views of its doctrines, are usually possessed with strong prejudices against those who hold the faith in orthodox purity and simplicity. For till the human heart be effectually humbled by God's grace to receive the Gospel terms of reconciliation with thankfulness and submission of soul, it always harbours an unhappy opposition to the covenant of grace in Christ Jesus; that is, it remains ignorant of God's righteousness, and, like the Jews, going about to establish its own righteousness, it does not submit to the righteousness of God *. The effect of such erroneous views is, that these nominal Christians, not only oppose the DOCTRINE to which they have not yet been brought to submit, but also thoroughly dislike, and are violently prejudiced against all those who receive it and value it as the one thing needful. This is the true key for understanding rightly a thousand prepossessions, aversions, and misrepresentations which we meet with in authors, and which on any other ground are utterly unaccountable.

I need not dissemble that numerous passages in the writings of Beausobre, convince me that he is no very warm advocate for the great Protestant doctrine of justification by faith. In one place, for example, upon a strong declaration by Melancthon recorded in his own hand-writing †, respecting the importance of that Christian article of doctrine, which asserts the efficacy of the merits of Christ without human works, he ventures to suggest that the passage was PERHAPS Luther's; and he afterwards adds, that one may hence learn how OBSTINATELY they were at that time attached to the

* Rom. x. 3. † Seck. II. 43.

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doctrine of justification by faith. I scarcely need observe, that those who hold this precious article of faith in the sense of which Luther held it, and in which the Church of England now holds it, never speak of it in this manner *.

From Melancthon's report of the conferences at Marpurg, I collect, that it was one of the first public objections of Luther to Zuingle, that the Swiss reformer and his adherents were not accustomed, in their religious instructions, to say much concerning the Scriptural method of justification; which, as Luther maintained, rendered it probable, that the peculiar and essential doctrine of the Gospel was hardly known to them †. On the whole, I believe, all dispassionate judges will be disposed to allow that these researches fully warrant the following conclusions:

Conclusions from the preceding facts.

1. That the Sacramental controversy did no good to Zuingle's temper, and much harm to Luther's.

2. That in the heat and haste of contention, Zuingle sometimes sank the efficacy both of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper below the true Scriptural standard, and represented them as mere tokens or badges of Christian society and connexion. Bucer, his own friend and advocate, whose testimony is therefore decisive, expressly allows this ‡. Let us however in one instance hear Zuingle himself. "You have celebrated the Lord's Supper;—Therefore you belong to the society of Christians."—"The cup which we use in giving thanks, what is it else but a mark of our society and connexion §?" In other places he represents the Lord's Supper, as im-

* Beausobre, III. 277.

† Ad. Hen. Sax. in Hosp. 81. b. Also Scult. 200.

‡ Bucer's Epistle in Melch. Ad. 19. Also Lect. in Ep. Zuing. et Œcolamp.

§ Ep. Zuing. et Œcolamp. II. 71. b. - - - "Quid ille aliud est, quam nostra conjunctio et societas?" Also 120. a & b. Likewise Ad Episcop. Const. Op. I. 225.

plying nothing but a mere "COMMEMORATION*;" which at best is a loose and ambiguous way of speaking†. CENT. XVI.

3. That Zuingle, in the article of original sin, probably was never completely orthodox ‡, and that in regard to the fundamental doctrine of justification by faith, though he seems always to have admitted it distinctly in theory, yet he by no means made that practical use of it which Luther and his disciples did. In effect, his time and thoughts were for years almost entirely taken up with the Sacramental controversy, and with disputes respecting baptism. On the contrary, Luther, though harassed with controversy beyond example, appears to have lived every hour of his life "by faith on the Son of God." The great doctrine of justification appears uppermost in all his voluminous writings: It was the support of his own soul in all his troubles; and we find him constantly inculcating it from the press and from the pulpit, in all his conversations, and in his most private letters. This part of the religious character of Luther is not relished by many.—They suppose he carried his notions too far §.

4. That on the duties of Christian subjects, and also on questions relative to ecclesiastical polity, there was a still greater difference between the Saxon and the Helvetian reformers.—Obey and suffer, was Luther's motto in general; whereas the obedience of Zuingle, we have seen, hung on a very slender thread.

5. That Dr. Maclaine justly ascribes to Zuingle an adventurous genius, and an uncommon degree of knowledge and penetration ‖. And this is so true, that in my judgment, it was the ADVENTUROUS

* Op. II. 85. b. And Maclaine, II. 197. note.

† See Dr. Ogden's Five excellent Discourses on the Lord's Supper, vol. II. 291.

‡ Vid. Pallav. Conc. Trid. III. 1. 3 & 4.

§ Maclaine, in Mosh. p. 170. Also Beaus. ut supra.

‖ In Mosh. p. 26.

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genius of this great man, which led him to speak in so peremptory a style of the holiness of the character of several celebrated heathens above mentioned. Luther's unbounded reverence for the written word, never allows him to use such liberties. "I HOPE," says he, "God will be merciful to Cicero, and to such as he was: however, it is not our duty to speak certainly touching that point, but to remain by the word revealed unto us; namely, whoso believeth and is baptized, the same shall be saved. Yet nevertheless, God is able to dispense and hold a difference among the nations and the heathen. But our duty is not to know nor to search after the time and measure *."

Here I cannot but take notice, that it was this excessive reverence for the very words of Scripture, —"This is my body,"—which betrayed Luther into the unfortunate dispute respecting Consubstantiation. Both on CON and TRANSubstantiation a vast quantity of inconclusive argumentation has been advanced on all sides. Often the contention has been merely verbal; oftener completely unintelligible †; and after all the confident attempts that have been made to represent either the one notion or the other as ridiculous, absurd, and impossible, I freely own that with me the decisive reason for rejecting them is not that either CON or TRANSubstantiation can be demonstrated to imply a contradiction in terms, but that the Scriptural declarations respecting the Sacrament do not require an interpretation so altogether remote from common sense and experience.

On Zuingle's relation of his dream, I am inclined

* Coll. Men. 509.

† Bucer, in a letter to a friend, owns that immediately after he had read Luther's Confession on Consubstantiation, published in 1528, he began to see that this Reformer did not hold the unworthy notions of the person of Christ which he had supposed him to do. But the fact is, Luther's Confession is full of metaphysical obscurities, and is scarcely intelligible. Vid. Scult. 154 & 171. Hosp. II. 166. Com. de Luth. II. XLI. 3.

to make no comment whatever, except that I cannot but think he would have judged better, if he had kept the thing entirely to himself; or at least, not made it so public at the time. Certainly, in our days, to mention such a circumstance in the pulpit, would rather expose the dreamer to ridicule than procure attention to his discourse.—Zuingle, however, knew both his own situation and that of the people of Zurich, better than we can do: He deemed the suggestion to be a communication from God: he was grateful for it: and no doubt he acted conscientiously in informing his congregation how he had obtained a new argument in favour of his view of the Sacrament. CENT. XVI.

With respect to the important subject of religious toleration, there can be no question but Luther was abundantly more enlightened than Zuingle.

Both these champions of the Reformation passed much of their lives in the midst of active, tumultuous, perilous scenes; and both of them met with great provocations from the Anabaptists. What room could there be for the private, tranquil exercises of religion; or even, for the study and practice of pastoral care and instruction? It happens however, that the writings of Luther abound in these things. His devotion never flags. Ever aware of the wiles of Satan, and well skilled in the use of Christian armour, his dependence both for himself and his people is always and altogether on the grace of God; yet his vigilance in superintending the Saxon churches is as incessant as if their spiritual improvement depended on himself. The comparison in this point, grounded on documents in existence, is unquestionably very much to the advantage of the Saxon Reformer.

The blemishes of Luther have been freely acknowledged in the course of this volume. It was proper and even necessary to advert to those of Zuingle for obvious reasons, and among others, that

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the reader may be the better enabled to appreciate duly the encomium of Dr. Maclaine, who scruples not to assert that the Swiss reformer was "perhaps BEYOND COMPARISON THE BRIGHTEST ORNAMENT OF THE PROTESTANT CAUSE *."

Which of the two was the first Reformer?

We must not dismiss this subject without briefly touching upon another point in the history of the Reformation, on which writers have not agreed in their representations. The Swiss historians, jealous of the honour of their country, contend that Zuingle as a reformer of religion has the precedence of Luther in point of time; and Dr. Maclaine seems out of humour with Mosheim, for leading us to imagine that Luther saw the truth as soon as Zuingle did. He tells us, moreover, that Zuingle had conceived "noble and extensive ideas of a general Reformation, at the very time that Luther retained almost the whole system of Popery, indulgences excepted."

General observations of this kind are hard to be confuted: they insinuate a great deal; often leave abiding impressions; yet prove little or nothing. A distinct statement of facts is the best way to settle the point in dispute.

Zuingle's own narrative.

Zuingle affirms, that he began to preach the Gospel in the year 1516, and that Luther's name at that time was not so much as heard of in Swisserland: that he was settled at Zurich in 1519, and then informed the leading members of the Collegiate church, that in future he intended to preach from the Gospel of St. Matthew, without using any comments but that of Scripture itself: that even then, in 1519, not one of the inhabitants had heard of Luther, except that he had published something on the subject of indulgences; but that in regard to these, Zuingle wanted no information; he knew very well before that indulgences were nothing but mere pretence and delusion. He adds, that the Romish cardinals, however they might hate him at that time, courted

* In Mosh. II.

him with all their address, and even attempted to corrupt him with Italian gold. CENT. XVI.

He then proceeds to praise Luther in the strongest terms.—"As far as I can judge," says he, "Luther is a very brave soldier of Christ, who examines the Scriptures with a diligence which no person else has used for the last thousand years. I do not care if the Papists call me a heretic as they do Luther: I say this; there has not existed any person since the commencement of the Romish pontificate, who has been so constant and immovable as Luther, in his attacks on the Pope. But to whom are we to look as the cause of all this new light and new doctrine? To God, or to Luther? Ask Luther himself: I know he will answer that the work is of God."

"Luther's interpretations of Scripture," continues Zuingle, "are so well founded, that no creature can confute them: yet I do not take it well to be called by the Papists a Lutheran, because I learned the doctrine of Christ from the Scriptures and not from Luther. If Luther preaches Christ, so do I: and though—thanks to God—innumerable people by his ministry, and more than by mine, are led to Christ, yet I do not choose to bear the name of any other than of Christ, who is my only captain, as I am his soldier. He will assign to me both my duties and my reward according to his good pleasure. I trust every one must now see WHY I do not choose to be called a Lutheran; though nevertheless, in fact, no man living esteems Luther so much as I do. However I have not on any occasion written a single line to him, nor he to me, directly or indirectly. And why have I thus abstained from all communication with him? Certainly not from fear, but to prove how altogether consistent is the Spirit of God, which can teach two persons, living asunder at such a distance, to write on the doctrines of Christ, and to instruct the people

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in them, in a manner so perfectly harmonious with each other*."

If some circumstances before mentioned have had the effect of depressing the character of Zuingle, these liberal and truly Christian sentiments will restore him again to the reader's favour. And as I know no reason whatever for suspecting that pride of precedence in point of time, or that any petty jealousy lurking in the mind of Zuingle, should induce him to speak in this manner, I am disposed to give this good man full credit for the sincerity of every part of his declaration. He had studied the Scriptures for himself, and through God's grace had made a progress in Christian knowledge. He found that Luther had not only done the same, but was also undermining and pulling to pieces, at the hazard of his own life, the whole Papal edifice. Accordingly he loved him as a Christian, and admired him as a hero.—But be it remembered, that the fatal controversy respecting the Sacrament had not yet begun!!

After all, this evidence only proves what nobody denies,—that the Swiss divine, like several before his time, and like many of his contemporaries, had begun to study the Scriptures, and had already discovered various corruptions and abominations in the Papal system. But here the question is, what progress had he made towards a reformation in the Church, when Luther first astonished all Europe with the novelty of his system, the judgment which he displayed in explaining and defending it, and the courage with which he withstood the combined power of popes and princes. It has been said that Zuingle, even in 1516, used "to censure, THOUGH WITH GREAT PRUDENCE AND MODERATION, the errors of a corrupt Church†." I would observe, that if Luther had never done more than this, Europe

* Zuing. I. Art. xviii. 37--39.

† Maclaine, in Mosh. II. 26.

might have been held at this moment in the chains of superstition and spiritual despotism. To sigh in secret, to inculcate even some important truths in a mild and placid way so as to give little offence, and to form in the imagination theoretical plans of reform, could never have availed to the emancipation of mankind. It is not that Zuingle was deficient either in understanding or intrepidity;—but how impolitic, how altogether vain and hopeless must it have appeared to oppose the enormous power of the Roman See! Again, it is not that Luther had preconceived, much less digested, any formal plan of resistance to the existing hierarchy: he constantly disclaims any such wisdom or foresight. In effect, it was by a train of peculiar circumstances, that he was gradually led on to a success beyond his most sanguine expectations; and as his endowments were admirably suited to the work he had to execute, I know no reason why we should be backward to allow that he was a chosen vessel, an honoured instrument in the hands of Providence for the great purposes which he accomplished. CENT. XVI.

In the year 1527, Luther complained to his friend M. Stifel, that he had received a most insolent and abusive letter from Zuingle; and that even his adversaries the Papists were not so much disposed as his friends to harass and persecute him; —friends, says he, who, before my contests with the Pope, were scarcely known, and did not dare to open their mouths*. Without dwelling one moment longer on the disgusting effects of the Sacramental controversy, I will subjoin two or three circumstances, which exhibit to my mind, beyond all contradiction, THE SORT OF TERMS which Zuingle kept up with the Roman Catholics, at the very time when Luther was the object of their most malignant fury and vengeance.

* Ep. II. Aurif. 345. 6. . . . ne hiscere quidem audebant.

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1. In the year 1520, Zuingle expresses himself concerning Luther in these very handsome terms*.

Zuingle's account of Luther, A. D. 1520.

"I have not much fear for Luther's life; I have none for the safety of his soul, even though he should be struck by this Jupiter with the thunderbolt of excommunication. Not that I despise excommunication; but that I think unjust sentences of that kind do harm to the body rather than the soul. It is not my business to decide whether Luther has had fair play. However, you know my sentiments on that subject. I intend shortly to call on the Pope's legate, and if he should say any thing respecting that business, as he did a little time ago, I will persuade him to advise the Pope by no means to publish the excommunication. And I believe it will be for his interest to listen to this advice; for if he does not, I foresee the Germans will despise both the bull of excommunication, and the Pope that sends it."

The Pope Adrian flatters Zuingle, A. D. 1523.

2. But there exists a still more decisive testimony to prove how very far Zuingle must have been from any thing like a rupture with the Papists, even in the year 1523. The Pope Adrian having heard of the reputation of the Helvetian divine for piety and learning, condescended to transmit to him, by his nuncio, a BRIEVE in his own hand-writing. He had received, he said, such particular accounts of his extraordinary virtue, as had increased his affection and esteem for a character so devoted to religion. He exhorts him to show a grateful zeal in promoting the interests of the Apostolic See, as he could assure him that it was his intention to place him in honourable and lucrative situations †.

Priority of Lutheranism.

Lastly, Pallavicini distinctly observes ‡, that not only in the diplomas of Adrian and Clement, which those pontiffs sent into Swisserland, but—what is more to the purpose—in the mandates which the

* Zuingle to his friend Myconius, Op. I. 412. b.

† Melch. Ad. in Zuing. 13. ‡ Concil. Trid. 3. I. 3.

Helvetian Catholics delivered to their own ambassadors upon the appointment of any embassy to Rome, the heresy of the country was called, in general, the Lutheran heresy. And the Italian historian gives two reasons for this; the first is, that though Zuingle and Luther differed in some points, yet that they agreed in the main. Secondly, that THE LUTHERAN HERESY EXISTED BEFORE THAT OF ZUINGLE, and became the more powerful in its partisans *. CENT. XVI.

This relation will assist the inquisitive student in clearing up some points in the memoirs of Luther and Zuingle, which have been much clouded by party zeal. The historian of the Church of Christ is desirous that his work should be distinguished by the selection, which it contains, of well authenticated facts: Of conjectures there is no end. Doubtless the Helvetian Reformer was a man of an acute understanding, and great Scriptural learning. His pastoral labours were a blessing to the congregations over which he presided †; and his writings proved a permanent support to the Protestant cause. These things are certain. It is, however, equally certain, that though in 1518 he opposed the Papal abuse of indulgences ‡, and afterwards exposed several errors of the Romish church, he yet so managed his opposition, as to be courted even by the Pope himself, long after Luther had been in open rebellion against the existing hierarchy. How this truly great man would have acted, had he been called to the trying scenes in which Luther bore so conspicuous a part, must be mere conjecture.

* The Roman-Catholic clergy in general, and especially the agents of the Papal See, have ever been so vigilant in observing the very beginnings of what they called heresies, that we may safely credit the historians of their communion, at least in their positive reports of the chronology of the several defections from the established church. For so far they were impartial judges; and they had certainly the best means of information.

† Arch. Zuin. I. 132. b. ‡ See Vol. iv. Chap. IV. Cent. XVI.

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On the other hand, any judgment that we can form of the manner in which the Saxon Reformer would have conducted himself in the situation of Zuingle, must be mere conjecture also. Yet I cannot but suspect, that his reputation would have suffered by the change of circumstances. There was that in Martin Luther, which required great and magnificent objects, attended with difficulties, dangers, and perplexities, to call forth those exertions of wisdom, courage, and perseverance, for which he is so justly celebrated. I may add, also, my entire conviction, that internal trials and distress of mind greatly improved his character; they made him a humbler Christian, and a more skilful adviser in spiritual things; and if Zuingle had experienced a similar afflictive discipline,—though perhaps he did not stand in need of that chastisement so much as Luther did—I suppose we should have heard abundantly more of his personal sufferings and lamentations on account of the deceitfulness of sin, the delusions of Satan, the workings of inward corruptions; and, above all, of those hidings of God's face, and that darkness of soul, which the most godly persons always represent as their grievous and intolerable calamity.

CHAP. XVII.

FROM THE COMPARISON OF LUTHER AND ZUINGLE TO THE DIET OF AUGSBURG IN 1530.

1. Persecutions.
2. Rupture between Charles V. and the Pope.
3. Diet of Spires in 1529.
4. Protest of the Reformers.
5. Meetings of the Protestants.
6. Diet of Augsburg.

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Success of the Gospel.

The progress of Divine knowledge, the genuine conversion of souls, and the abolition of abominable superstitions, were carried on with no great interruption for the space of ten years, and upwards; that is, till the year 1529, reckoning from the year 1517, when Luther, unable to smother his indignation, first raised his voice against Tetzel, the impudent vender of indulgences, and at the same time pointed out the Roman Pontiff himself as the leading culprit in that iniquitous traffic. The success of the Gospel, if we except the Apostolic age, was perhaps in this period unexampled. Even in Italy, in a town called Fayenza, we are told by Father Paul, that there was public preaching against the Church of Rome, and that Gospellers increased every day *.

* P. 43.

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1. PERSECUTIONS.

Various Persecutions.

WE are however not to forget, that notwithstanding this blessed influence of the written Word, persons, who openly avowed their conviction of the truth, were miserably exposed to persecution in all those places where either the civil or the ecclesiastical ruler happened to be an active and zealous Roman Catholic. The catalogue of the sufferers is very considerable.——It may however suffice to add, to the instances already noticed at page 467, a few others of the most remarkable cases.

A woman burnt in Bohemia, A. D. 1527.

In 1527, a Bohemian woman, after a confinement of almost a whole year, was cast into the flames, on account of two crimes laid to her charge.

1. That by denying the corporeal presence of Christ's natural body, she had blasphemed the Sacrament of the altar.

2. That she had been rebaptized by John Kalens. The wooden cup which Kalens had used in the administration of the Lord's Supper, was burnt along with this heretic *.

Letter of Ecolampadius.

Sometimes the Evangelical preachers, when proscribed by Papal cruelty, fled from their habitations to save their lives. There is on record an admirable consolatory letter of Ecolampadius, written in 1528, to two persons of this sort then in exile.—"It would move a heart of adamant," says he, "my dear brethren, to think of your flocks thus deprived of their faithful shepherds, dispersed and exposed to the wolves: then to see the adversaries triumphing and glorying in their iniquity; and the weaker brethren, who were on the very eve of renouncing Popery, suddenly alarmed, and apprehensive of a similar treatment. Add to this, the dangers, the ignominy, the distresses of exile, which are sometimes more grievous than death itself. For, exiles undergo a daily death. However, when we

* Scult. XXVII. p. 111.

reflect that God is faithful, and will not tempt us above what we are able to bear, but will regulate every thing according to the strength which he is pleased to give, this consideration supplies an abundance of substantial consolation. Be assured, the Holy Ghost, who has anointed you for this contest, will not fail to preserve you from fainting in the afflictions which ye undergo for the truth. Moreover, your silence during your proscription speaks louder by much to the hearts of God's children, than ever your most animated sermons could do. Your present firmness fixes an inviolable seal on the doctrines you have been teaching with so much piety. The blood of Abel has a voice; and so has your persecution a tongue. Away then with cowardice and lamentation. Happy the man who is conformed to the image of the crucified Saviour, whom we preach. Christ knows his sheep; he will preserve them from the jaws of the wolf; and the exultation of the hypocrites will be but for a moment *."

Elizabeth of Brandenburg escapes from Berlin.

Joachim, the elector of Brandenburg, distinguished himself at this time in persecuting the Lutherans. This bigoted prince had confined for some days in her chamber, on account of her attachment to the Gospel, his own wife Elizabeth, the sister of the afore-mentioned exiled king of Denmark; and was intending to immure her perpetually; when by the help of her brother, she effected a wonderful escape from Berlin; was conveyed in the waggon of a peasant, and hospitably received by the elector of Saxony †.

Flight of the duchess of Munsterberg, A. D. 1528.

The duchess of Munsterberg also, named Ursula, had this year a most miraculous escape from the monastery of Friburg; and fled with two virgins to Luther for protection. This was a most mortifying event to George of Saxony; for this duchess was his own cousin ‡.

* Scult. XXVIII. 173. Ep. Zuing. and Ecolamp. 4. 191. b.
† Scultet. 174. Spal. in Seck. 122. II. Ep. Aurif. 375.
‡ Scult. Ibid. II. Ep. 390. b.

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Persecutions in France.

In France the persecutions were dreadful. The Papists persuaded the king, that all the misfortunes with which the country was afflicted, were owing to the mischievous Lutheran heresy. In consequence, the most sanguinary laws were solemnly decreed against Lutheranism, and every one who could be proved to favour the doctrine was treated as a blasphemer *. Yet this same prince, Francis I., notwithstanding the zeal with which his Catholic clergy availed to inspire him, had no objection, for the purpose of more effectually serving his political schemes, to endeavour, by the medium of his ambassadors, to promote in Swisserland that very reformation of religion, which he was labouring to expel from his own kingdom by fire and sword. Zuingle, in a letter to Ecolampadius, tells us, that the royal ambassadors of France pressed the five catholic cantons of Swisserland to allow the word of God to be preached among them, according to the system of the Reformers †.

Inconsistency of Francis I.

Persecutions in North Holland.

In North Holland, a widow, named Wendelmut, was seized on account of her religion, carried to the Hague, and there strangled, and afterwards burnt to ashes.—On her examination concerning the mass, she answered, "It was a piece of bread;" and in regard to the images and pictures of saints, she confessed she knew of no other mediator but Jesus Christ. To one that told her, she did not fear death because she had not tasted it, this widow replied, "I shall never taste it; for Christ has said, If any man keep my sayings, he shall never see death." She was then advised to confess her sins to a priest: upon which she cried aloud, "I have confessed all my sins to Christ my Lord, who takes away all sin. But if I have offended my neighbours, I heartily ask them forgiveness." She then went to the place of execution with meekness and courage ‡.

* Scult. 175. † Op. Zuing. I. 419. b.
‡ Brandt, 56 Scult. p. 111.

It is said that some of the Moravian brethren, as well as other pious persons of those times, were baptized a second time; and this, not as proselytes of Anabaptism, but merely because they could then see no other way of separating themselves from a wicked world*. And we may observe in general, that it is not always easy to distinguish, in the accounts of the Anabaptist-martyrs, who were truly humble Christians. We cannot however doubt of the REALITY of the sufferings of the unfortunate victims, when the facts are distinctly recorded with triumph by the Romish historians themselves. On this ground it is, that I select from Cocklæus,—who otherwise is rarely to be trusted in any question respecting the Reformers,—the following testimonies of the execrable barbarity of the Papists. "At Rotenberg by the river Neckar," says this fiery zealot, "many of the Anabaptists, both men and women, were apprehended; and all put to death that refused to recant their errors. Nine men were burnt: Ten women were drowned. But their leader and teacher, Michael Sellarius, an apostate monk, who was by far the greatest offender, was condemned in a public court of judicature,—to have his blasphemous tongue cut out by the executioner; to be tied to a curricle, and to have two pieces of his flesh torn from his body in the market-place, by red-hot pincers; then to be torn again afterwards in the same manner by the hot pincers five times on the road, as he was dragged to the burning pile." This sentence, the author tells us, was executed on the 17th of May 1527: and he proceeds to exclaim what a grievous deceiver Sellarius had been; and among other things mentions his teaching of the people not to invoke saints†;

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Papal account of Persecutions.

Martyrdom of Michael Sellarius,

* Scult. 177.

† Cocklæus de Luth. XXVII. 163.

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but not one word escapes this malignant and bigoted historian, concerning the firmness, patience, or piety of the martyr.

and of Henry of Tournay, A. D. 1528.

At Tournay in Flanders, in 1528, an Augustine monk, named Henry, was condemned to the flames, for having thrown off his dress, married a wife, and preached against Popery. The bishop's official told him, he might save his life, if he would but own that the woman he had married was his concubine. But he, refusing to lengthen his days on such terms, praised God by singing Te Deum, and soon after cheerfully finished his course in the fire*.

2. Rupture between Charles V. and the Pope.

The wars of the Emperor were favourable to the Protestants.

Notwithstanding these dreadful narratives, which sufficiently demonstrate the cruel and unrelenting hostility of the papal hierarchy, there is no doubt but the violence of the war between Francis I. and the Emperor, as also the dissensions between the Emperor and the Pope, proved extremely favourable to the progress of the Reformation. For though the spirit of persecution was not in the least abated, yet it spent its chief fury on such defenceless individuals as happened to fall into the cruel hands of some bigoted ruler, ecclesiastic or civil. The three potentates above-mentioned were themselves beset with too many difficulties in their political affairs to give much serious and steady attention to the business of religion. Add, that their respective interests were often so opposite and perplexed, as entirely to exclude all amicable concurrence in the formation of any general plan for the extirpation of heresy. In effect, it is by reflecting on these jarring interests, with an overruling Providence constantly in the mind, that we are enabled in some measure

* Brandt, 57. Scult. 176.

to account not only for the mild decree of the diet of Spires in 1526, but also for the inefficiency of the succeeding attempts of the great Papal powers to stifle the revival of Christian truth and liberty. The Pope, no doubt, was sincere in his desires to crush every symptom of growing Protestantism, but Charles V. had neither leisure nor inclination to gratify the wishes of a pontiff who had so lately entered into an alliance against him with the French and the Venetians. The religion of this prince, as far as it was real, is supposed to have been Roman-Catholic; but whatever it was, he never suffered it to interfere with his ambitious schemes of secular aggrandizement. Even the Pope himself ceased to have the least influence with him, the moment the politics of the court of Rome appeared to thwart those of his Imperial majesty. On the other hand, the principles of Clement VII. were in no degree better. Under the pretence that hard and unjust terms had been extorted from the king of France while a prisoner in Spain*, Clement at once absolved him from the oath by which he was bound to execute the treaty of Madrid, and sent a person both to congratulate him on his deliverance from captivity, and to settle a treaty against Charles; and lastly, he dispatched a brieve to the Emperor, full of accusation, invective, and menace†. CENT. XVI.

Rupture between Charles V. and the Pope.

This proceeding of Clement VII. inflamed the resentment of the Emperor to such a degree, that he abolished the authority of the Roman pontiff throughout all his Spanish dominions‡, made war upon him in Italy, laid siege to Rome, and blocked up Clement himself in the castle of St. Angelo, where he was reduced to the extremity of feeding on

* Pallav. 2. 13. 6. † Paul Sarpi, Goldast. Pol. Imp. 987.

‡ Thuanus I. XI.; who here observes, that Spain has hereby left to posterity a remarkable proof, that the ecclesiastical discipline may be preserved without the authority of the Pope.

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asses' flesh, and at length compelled to capitulate on severe terms, and to remain a prisoner until the chief articles were performed*.

Such in brief were the important consequences of that confederacy which has been termed the HOLY LEAGUE†, because the Pope was at the head of it. The DETAIL of the war we leave to the secular historians, having no concern with victories or defeats, diminutions or extensions of empire; or with the ambitious plans and schemes that produce them, any further than as these things frequently affect the interests of the Gospel, lay open the secret motives of the principal actors, and thereby explain a number of circumstances, otherwise utterly inexplicable, in the history of the Church of Christ.

Therefore with these objects in view, we judge it expedient to give some account of two memorable letters, which the Emperor thought fit to write,—one of them to the Pope himself, the other to his Cardinals at Rome,—before he came to an absolute rupture with Clement VII.

Charles's Letter to the Pope.

1. In the former, he accuses the Pope of ingratitude, putting him in mind that it was by his assistance he had been raised to the pontifical chair. "The king of England," he said, "had been called the PROTECTOR of the Holy League; whereas that monarch had assured him in his letters, that he neither had, nor would accept that title, though the Pope had pressed him to do so. The king of France, moreover, made no scruple to own publicly, that before he returned from Madrid to his own country, he had been urged by the Pope to enter into the new alliance; and the Emperor added, that he knew the Pope had absolved him from the oath by which he was bound, either to observe the articles of peace, or return to his captivity‡.

He then proceeds to put his Holiness in mind,

* Jov. Vit. Colon. 167, in Rob. II.
† Traités de Paix, II. 124. ‡ Pallav. 2. 13. 6.

that the Pope of Rome received more money from the subjects of his Imperial highness, than from all the other kings of Christendom put together. That a judgment might be formed of the magnitude of those annual receipts from the hundred grievances which had been presented to his court by the Germanic body: That, as Emperor, such had always been his devotion and reverence for the Apostolic See, he had hitherto FORBORNE TO LISTEN TO THE COMPLAINTS OF HIS GERMAN SUBJECTS: but that if, for good reasons he should be driven to withhold those revenues, then the Pope would no longer possess the golden keys which open and shut the gates of war; he would no longer be allowed to carry on hostilities against the Emperor with the money which belonged to the subjects of his Imperial highness; for that it would certainly be more just for the Emperor to apply that money to the purposes of his own defence. CENT. XVI.

Charles V. then concludes, by roundly telling the Pope, that if he was still determined to go on with the war, and would not listen to the reasons he had alleged, he should look upon him as acting not the part of a father, but of the head of a faction; not of a pastor, but of an invader of the just rights of sovereigns. This, he said, was his ultimatum, and he should appeal to a general council of the whole Christian world*.

2. In his letter addressed to the College of Cardinals, Charles, with much parade, insists on the purity of his intentions, his great moderation, and continued endeavours to establish peace and tranquillity. "How shocked then, and how disgusted," he said, "must any one be to read the Brieve which had been delivered to him by the nuncio, and had the sanction of so eminent a pontiff and of so many pious and Christian fathers. It was evidently written for the express purpose of vilifying His Letter to the Cardinals.

* Goldast. I. 81. & III. 492.

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and degrading the Emperor who was the protector of the Apostolic See. It breathed nothing but war, sedition, false and injurious accusations against himself; and yet there was not any prince who so much respected the holy See, or defended its dignity with so disinterested a care. It was his innate reverence for the Roman hierarchy, which had induced him, when he was at the diet of Worms, to turn A DEAF EAR to all the importunate complaints and petitions of the Germans. In effect, by the steps he had taken to serve the Pope, he had in some measure alienated the minds of his German subjects, particularly by forbidding, under a heavy penalty, the intended assembly of the princes at Spires*. He had prohibited that convention, because he foresaw such a meeting would prove disadvantageous to the Pope; and in order to sooth the minds of the princes under their disappointment, he had then given them hopes of having a general council in a short time. He had explained all these things with great care to the Pope, and had admonished him to call a council. He concluded this address to the cardinals with requesting them to concur with himself in putting Clement VII. in mind of his duty, and in exhorting him to preserve the peace of Christendom, which good purpose would be best effected by the convocation of a general council without further delay.

Then, if the Pope should persist in refusing to hear reason, the Emperor called on the cardinals themselves to come forward, and in their own name summon the council which was so much wanted. And lastly, if the reverend Fathers should oppose his equitable requisition, he told them, he himself would not fail to use such remedies as God had put in his power, for the protection of religion and the tranquillity of Christendom†.

* Page 169. † Goldast. I. 102. III. 493.

Charles V., in his indignation against Clement, published these manifestos, and did every thing he could to give notoriety to his complaints *. The German Protestants also most industriously dispersed the same. And we need not wonder that such extraordinary documents should have been read with prodigious eagerness. What could those, who well remembered the Emperor's solemn declarations, both at Worms, and on other occasions, against Lutheranism, now think of his religion or conscience, when they heard him confess that he had stopped his ears against the honest prayers of Germany, merely to please the Pope? Who would scruple to say, that having betrayed the interests of his imperial subjects, he could in his own turn expect no better than to be betrayed by an unprincipled Pontiff?

Publication of the Emperor's manifestos.

No more needs be said to convince thinking persons of the effects which must have been produced on the public mind by these manifestos of the Emperor. Full as acrimonious and reproachful as the bitterest invectives of Luther, they not only emboldened men, after the example of Charles, to treat the Pope with little reverence, but also lowered exceedingly the credit of the whole dominant ecclesiastical establishment, and of all its most strenuous supporters. The publication of them had in effect divulged a dangerous secret,—by many indeed sufficiently known before,—yet did it require extraordinary confidence in Charles, to make a public avowal, which in substance, though not in words, amounted to a confession, "That reverence towards the Pope was no more than an art of government covered with the cloak of religion†." The disclosure of so much political manœuvre and defective morality did more than counterbalance all that he had hitherto done against the Reformers, whose conduct, ever marked by ingenuousness and plain

* Du Pin, II. 20. † Paul Sarpi, 39.

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dealing, appeared a PERFECT CONTRAST to all this duplicity, artifice, and inconsistency.

If the contention and animosity of two such unprincipled potentates as the Pope and the Emperor, thus operated in 1526 at the Diet of Spires to check the persecuting spirit of the Romanists, and to prevent any systematic attempt to exterminate the Protestants, it required no great foresight to predict the lamentable consequences of their union or alliance. To their lasting shame be it recorded, that the moment a prospect opened for the accommodation of their own respective political differences, both Clement VII. and Charles V. concurred in wreaking their united vengeance on the defenders of the sacred cause of religion and liberty*.

3. ANOTHER DIET AT SPIRES IN 1529.

THE decree of the Diet of Spires was equivalent to a toleration of Luther's opinions in all the states where those opinions were approved by their respective governors or magistrates; but in 1529 a new Diet was assembled at the same place, when the said decree was, by a majority of suffrages, so far revoked, as to forbid all further propagation of novel opinions in religion. Those who had observed the execution of the edict of Worms, were ordered to continue the execution of it. Those who had changed their religious system, and could not without danger of sedition revert to the ancient usages, were to be quiet, and make no further innovation till the meeting of a council. The celebration of mass [illegible] not to be obstructed in any place whatever; and lastly, the Anabaptists were proscribed in the severest terms, and made subject to capital punishments†.

Severe Decree of the Diet of Spires in 1529.

*. The Pope and Charles V. concluded a treaty of peace at Barcelona, June 20, 1529. Guicc. Lib. XIX. 522.

† Sleidan, 171. Goldast. III. 495. II. 155.

The motives of Clement in this business were sufficiently intelligible. A Pope of Rome, in peace or in war, confined and starved in a castle, or reseated in the chair of St. Peter issuing brieves and bulls for the terror of Christendom, never loses sight of his grand object, the maintenance of his supreme and despotical jurisdiction;—well aware, that should that be in the least impaired, the whole edifice of the pontifical authority would be thereby at once endangered. CENT. XVI.

The precise views of Charles V. in urging the harsh decree of this Diet, may admit of some doubt. Perhaps he thereby hoped to attach firmly to his interests—or at least to sooth and gratify—the Pope, whose sacred character he had lately insulted with so many indignities. Perhaps he beheld the new doctrines as leading to close and durable confederacies in Germany, which might eventually weaken the Imperial authority. Or he might imagine, that a resolute, well-timed, and rigorous exertion of authority, would prove useful both for the protection and extension of his prerogatives, several of which, he would naturally suppose, were not much relished by a bold and turbulent race of people, of whom almost one half had already revolted from the papal domination. These, it must be owned, are only conjectures; but we are SURE that the ambition of this prince was restless, insatiable, and constantly impelling him, both to narrow the power of the Roman See, and also to encroach on the liberties of his German subjects. He had abundantly satisfied his revenge in the late humiliation of Clement*; yet he still menaced that pontiff with the prospect of an impending general council: and, in regard to the Germans, he certainly looked on their domestic troubles and divisions as in the main extremely favourable to his arbitrary and despotic intention.—This monarch

* Thuan. I. XI.

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was what the world calls a great politician; but not what the Scripture describes as a good man. His understanding became vitiated by his inordinate thirst after dominion, and by his unexampled prosperity; insomuch, that notwithstanding all his natural good sense, and all his experience, he was frequently the dupe of his own intricate schemes and projects.

4. Protest of the Reformers.

Iniquitous as was the decree of the second Diet of Spires, it would doubtless have been much more rigorous and oppressive, if Charles had not been still at war with the French and his inveterate rival Francis I. The recess of this Diet is dated in April: and the peace of Cambray, between the Emperor and the king of France, was not concluded till the succeeding August*.

Fourteen Imperial cities†, with the elector of Saxony, the marquis of Brandenburg, the dukes of Lunenburg, and the prince of Anhalt at their head, in firm but moderate language solemnly PROTESTED against the decree of the Diet, as unjust and intolerable, and in every way calculated to produce discontent and tumult. Hence arose for the first time the denomination of PROTESTANTS‡, an honourable appellation, which not only in Germany, but other nations, is given to all those sects of Christians who renounce the superstitious Romish communion§.

Origin of the term Protestant.

Appeal of the Protestants.

The Protestant princes and protectors of the reformed churches were not satisfied with merely

* Traités de Paix, p. 170.

† The names of the cities are, Strasburg, Nuremberg, Ulm, Constance, Reutlingen, Windsheim, Meinengen, Lindau, Kempten, Hailbron, Isna, Weissemburg, Nordlingen, and St. Gall.

‡ This term, on account of its convenient use, has been frequently anticipated in the course of this History.

§ Sleidan, 173.

expressing their dissent from the decree of the Diet; they also drew up all their grievances in form; and appealed to the Emperor and to a future general council, or to a lawful Germanic council, and to all impartial judges. Lastly, they fixed upon ambassadors, whom they directed to lay all their proceedings before his Imperial majesty. Charles had not been present at the late Diet, but had received from his brother Ferdinand, who had there presided in his place, an exact account of all that passed; and having at length concluded a peace with France, was now in Italy on his road to Bologna. CENT. XVI.

The German ambassadors were introduced to him at Placentia*, and there they executed their commission with a spirit and resolution worthy of the princes whom they represented. Nothing however could be more discouraging than the reception they met with from this haughty monarch, whose vain mind was now puffed up with a series of extraordinary successes. By a message delivered to the deputies three days before they were admitted into his presence, he admonished them to be brief in what they had to say; and on their introduction he repeated the same admonition. Afterwards, when he had heard their objections to the decree, and they had waited a full month for his answer†, he told them, "that he exceedingly lamented their divisions; but nevertheless insisted on obedience to the decree which was passed for the purpose of putting an end to the mischievous sects of every description. He had written, he said, to the elector of Saxony and his associates, and had commanded them, in conformity to their oaths, to obey the decree of the Diet; and if they were refractory, he should be compelled, for the sake of example and good government, to punish such contumacy with severity. He asserted, that himself and the rest of the princes regarded the peace of their consciences and the salvation of their

* Sleidan, 177. † Ibid. 178.

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souls, as much as the Protestants could do; and moreover, that he was also as desirous of a general council as they could be, though, said he, there would not be much occasion for it, provided the lawful decrees of the Diet, especially that of Worms, were duly enforced."

The Emperor's Answer to the Appeal.

On receiving this answer, the ambassadors produced the act of appeal, as it had been drawn up at Spires; but Charles's minister for some time refused to deliver it to his master: and afterwards, when he had ventured to present that spirited memorial, the monarch's pride was so severely wounded by this instance of opposition to his will, that in a rage he ordered the German ambassadors to be put under an arrest for some days; and, on pain of death, neither to stir a foot from their apartments, nor write a line to their Protestant princes*.

5. Meetings of the Protestants.

The account of this contemptuous and violent procedure of Charles V. soon found its way to Nuremberg, and convinced the Protestant party that it was high time for them to consult for their protection against a powerful potentate intoxicated with success and irritated by opposition. Then, whatever hopes they might place in foreign assistance, it was plain that little was to be done without unanimity at home. The Papal adherents had for a long time been well aware of this; and at the Diet of Spires had employed two of their most able and artful agents, Eckius, and Faber bishop of Vienna†, to exert their utmost efforts in widening the breach between the disciples of Luther and of Zuingle. On the other side, the good Landgrave of Hesse, both at Spires and afterwards at Marpurg, exhausted all the means which human prudence could suggest‡, to bring about if possible between the contending

† Sleidan, 179. † Ep. Melan. IV. 83. ‡ Page 518.

parties an accommodation of so much importance, in the present struggle for deliverance from the yoke of superstition and ecclesiastical despotism. CENT. XVI.

In effect, the heads of the Protestants, even while they were in suspense respecting the Emperor's answer to their embassy, were so much alarmed at the late decree of Spires, that for the wise purpose of enlarging and cementing a defensive confederacy, they had a solemn conference at Roth in the month of June*; and, moreover, at Nuremberg they drew up certain articles of their intended alliance†.

In the succeeding October they met again at Sultzbach‡; and upon hearing of the severe treatment of their ambassadors at Placentia, they again assembled about the end of November at Smalcald; and lastly once more at Nuremberg, early in the January of the succeeding year, 1530§.

All these deliberations, owing to the various and jarring sentiments of the deputies, failed of producing the desirable issue. However the Sacramentarian dissension, exasperated by the incurable obstinacy of Luther, appears to have been the principal, though perhaps not the only obstruction to unanimity. The tender conscience of the elector of Saxony rendered this prince averse to a military confederacy, even of defence, which might seem formed in opposition to the legitimate government of the country. His scruples are well known to have originated from Luther, who a little before the convention at Smalcald, exhorted him in the strongest terms not to think of using force against the Emperor in the defence of religion‖. In his arguments he was supported by Melancthon and Bugenhagius.

At Nuremberg, in January, the deputies had almost resolved to send a new and more respectable

* Seck. 135. a. † Sleid. 176.
‡ Du Pin, 114. Sleid. 176.
§ Sleid. 180. 181. Com. de Luth. XLVIII. et Add.
‖ Com. de Luth. XLVIII. 2.

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embassy to his Imperial majesty; but the assembly was but thinly attended, and as it was understood that the Emperor would soon summon another Diet of all the Germanic princes and orders, they abandoned their first intentions; and contented themselves with coming to this ultimate resolution,—that each state should deliberate for itself, and within the space of a month, transmit to the elector of Saxony its peculiar sentiment, in order that the Protestants at so critical a juncture might act in concert, both in regard to the common defence, and also the objects to be aimed at in the ensuing Diet.

6. Diet of Augsburg.

Charles V. arrived at Bologna on the fifth of November 1529, and on the thirty-first of January of the succeeding year sent his mandatory letters into Germany for the purpose of summoning a general Diet of the empire, to be held at Augsburg on the eighth day of April. At Bologna, on the twenty-fourth of February, his own birth-day*, he was crowned with great pomp by the Pope himself; with whom he continued to reside in the same palace till the following month of March†.

During the winter-months these two mighty potentates had held many consultations concerning the state of religion in Germany, and the best methods of extirpating heresy; but their views were materially different. The Pope dreaded nothing so much as general councils, which he represented as factious, and, at best, slow in their operation. The case, he said, was desperate, and required speedy and rigorous measures: The clemency of the Emperor was ill-judged, and had in effect exasperated the spirit of rebellion; and it was now incumbent on him

* Du Pin.

† Sleidan, 181. 186. It was thought not so proper to perform the solemnity of the coronation at Rome, in the presence of those who had sacked it but two years before. P. Sarpi, 47.

to support the Church, and crush the heretics by force. Charles, though at this time much disposed to gratify the Pope, was convinced that his German subjects were not to be trifled with; and it is not improbable but he might feel some compunction, for having lately exhibited so much unreasonable resentment in his insolent treatment of their ambassadors at Placentia. CENT. XVI.

Whether the mind of the Emperor really revolted at the iniquitous suggestion of condemning the honest Protestants unheard, and of putting an end at once to their political existence, it may be hard to say; certain it is, that in the conferences with the Pope at Bologna, whatever approached in the least degree to moderation and impartiality, originated with Charles V. and not with Clement VII. The Pope and his whole party demonstrated by their activity in open persecution, and by their secret manœuvres which have since transpired, that they sighed for the universal destruction of Protestantism. The Emperor in his own judgment, there is reason to believe, deemed the convocation of a council to be the proper expedient at this season, but having peremptorily refused to comply with the sanguinary proposals of the Pope, he was disposed so far to humour his Holiness, as first to adopt a less offensive measure, namely, the appointment of a Diet of the Empire. A general council was the next thing to be tried: but it was agreed that without the most urgent necessity, recourse should not be had to a remedy, the mere mention of which filled the mind of Clement with the most harassing apprehensions; and in every event, Charles appears to have bound himself by an unequivocal promise, to use the most efficacious endeavours for the reduction of all the rebellious adversaries of the Catholic religion*.

Notwithstanding the disposition in which the Emperor left Bologna, the Pope had the precaution Precautions of the Pope.

* Maim. 142. P. Sarpi, 49.

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to appoint Cardinal Campeggio not only as his own representative and plenipotentiary at the ensuing Diet, but also as an honorary attendant on his Imperial majesty during all his journey to Augsburg: and to secure still more effectually the pontifical interests, he dispatched P. Vergerio as his nuncio to Ferdinand in Germany, with secret instructions to consult with that prince, and strain every nerve to hinder the convocation of a council. Vergerio was a lawyer, and proved himself well qualified for the commission with which he was entrusted. He injured the Lutherans by every method he could devise. The exertions of the Popish divines Eckius, Faber, and Cocklæus, might undoubtedly have been depended upon: but Vergerio thought it best to ensure their activity by munificent presents. This precious commissioner was likewise directed to gratify king Ferdinand, by informing him that the Pope was ready to grant him, in support of the war against the Turks, both a contribution from the clergy of Germany, and also the gold and silver ornaments of the churches*.

Thus did the Roman pontiff, with fire and sword in one hand, and artifice and corruption in the other, endeavour to extirpate the godly Protestants; and meanwhile, with consummate hypocrisy, express the most ardent wishes for peace and harmony, and the restoration of Gospel principles in the Church of Christ.

The seventeen Articles of Torgau.

John THE CONSTANT, the excellent elector of Saxony, was determined to procure for the Protestants, if possible, a fair hearing at the Diet of Augsburg. And with a view to prevent all loose and fugitive discussion in a business of such immense importance, and also to enable any equitable judge to see distinctly all the leading points of religion which had produced so many volumes of controversy, he wisely directed his Wittemberg divines to draw up

* Sleidan, 182. P. Sarpi, 49.

in a narrow compass the heads of that religious system, which had produced the separation from the Romish communion. This, though an affair of considerable nicety, was presently effected by Luther. For the doctrines in question had already been digested into seventeen articles; and had been proposed twice in the conferences at Sultzbach, and once in that at Smalcald *, as the confession of faith to be agreed on by the Protestant confederates. These seventeen articles, with little or no alteration, were delivered by Luther, at Torgau †, to the Elector then on his road to Augsburg; and served as a basis for a more orderly and elaborate composition, to be exhibited at the approaching Diet. For the execution of a work of so great moment, the Protestant princes employed the elegant and accurate pen of Melancthon, the result of whose labours was a treatise, admired even by many of its enemies for its piety, learning, and perspicuity.—This celebrated performance is well known under the title of the CONFESSION OF AUGSBURG; and in the next Volume of this History of the Church of Christ, the reader will find a more particular description of its contents ‡, together with a brief detail of the proceedings of the Diet of Augsburg, and also of the consequences of the infamous decree of that assembly in November 1530 §, which furnished matter of much exultation to the supporters of the Papacy, while it dejected and even alarmed many of the sincerest friends and protectors of the cause of religious truth and liberty.

CENT. XVI.

The Confession of Augsburg.

The Reformation, as we have seen, in spite of all the efforts of Papal rage and malignity, had not

* Com. de Luth. XLII. 4. & XLVIII. & Add. See also p. 441.

† Ibid. LV. 4.

‡ The Confession of Augsburg contains twenty-eight Chapters.

§ The Protestant league at Smalcald was one of those consequences.

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ceased to spread and prosper throughout various districts. The great city of Strasburg, in the former part of 1529, could not, by all the remonstrances of the Imperial regency, be deterred from adopting the bold resolution of abolishing the mass; moreover, Count Philip of Hanover, though menaced by a formidable opposition, introduced Evangelical doctrine in the same year throughout his dominions. Many instances indeed of the martyrdom of godly men might be added to the several catalogues already given; but the good Protestants were accustomed to these sufferings, and bore them with extraordinary patience and fortitude*: however, as soon as they heard of the deplorable issue of the Diet of Augsburg, they justly concluded that the Pope and the Emperor had resolved on their entire destruction; and they looked on the publication of the new edict, which was in effect severer than that of Worms, as the signal for the commencement of more violent and barbarous persecutions than any they had experienced before.

Diet of Augsburg, A. D. 1530.

The Diet of Augsburg in 1530, forms a sort of era in the history of the Reformation; but at present we shall say no more concerning it, than—1. That the German princes, the magnanimous defenders of the sacred cause, assembled at Smalcald towards the end of the year, and there concluded a solemn alliance of mutual defence; and—2. That some of the most wise and pious of the Protestant theologians, especially Melancthon, were so oppressed by the prospect of the calamities which threatened the afflicted Church of Christ, that they were almost ready to abandon the contest, and give themselves up to melancholy and lamentation.

* Sleidan mentions two learned divines, who were burnt at Cologne in 1529. And Ab. Scultet reports from a MS. of Bullinger, that at Rothweil, an imperial city in Suabia, three hundred and eighty-five persons were driven into exile for deserting the doctrines of the Papacy.

We will conclude this Volume with an observation or two on the conduct of Luther, about the time of this very critical conjuncture.

Conduct of Luther before the meeting of the Diet.

1. Before the Diet of Augsburg, in the year 1529, while the tempest of persecution was lowering on the faithful, this indefatigable servant of God was employed in publishing his lesser and greater Catechism, which at this day are treatises of authority in the Lutheran Churches. In the preface to each, he deplores the ignorance of the people at large, and asserts, that those who know nothing of Christian principles, ought not even to be called by their name. He expatiates on the utility of catechizing; recommends the frequent use of it to masters of families; cites his own example of attending to the first catechetical truths for the purpose of edification, notwithstanding the proficiency which, in a course of years, he might be supposed to have made; and observes, that daily reading and meditation, among many other advantages, has this,—that a new light and unction from the Holy Spirit is hence, from time to time, afforded to the humble soul. With such godly simplicity was Luther conversant in the Gospel-practice; and so totally distinct was the spiritual understanding and improvement, which he desired to encourage in the Church, from the mere theory of frigid theological disquisition. Perhaps no history since the days of the Apostles, affords a more remarkable instance of the humility and condescension of a primary theologian, in stooping to the infirmities of the weak, and lowering himself to the most uncultivated minds, than is exhibited by the publication of these two Catechisms.

Luther's Eulogium on Melancthon.

In the same year, Luther accompanied Melancthon's Commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians, with a memorable eulogium on the author; in which he frankly declared, that he preferred the

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works of Melancthon to his own, and was more desirous that they should be read than any thing which he himself had composed. "I," says he, "am born to be a rough controversialist; I clear the ground, pull up weeds, fill up ditches, and smooth the roads. But to build, to plant, to sow, to water, to adorn the country, belongs, by the grace of God, to Melancthon."

It was a singular felicity of the infant Church of Saxony, that its two great luminaries, exceedingly diverse as they were in temper and in gifts, should have been constantly united in the bonds of a strict affection, which never seems to have admitted the least degree of envy or jealousy. Such is the light in which these two worthies are transmitted to posterity;—an incontestable pair of disinterested friends, whose sole object of contention was to excel each other in proofs of mutual regard!

Luther's conduct after the Diet.

2. It was in the low and desponding state of the Protestant party,—for example, after such a lamentable defeat as they had suffered at the Diet of Augsburg, that the spirit and character of Luther was calculated to shine forth with peculiar lustre, and in its true and genuine colours. By his unwearied vigilance in superintending the reformed Churches, and by his incessant attacks on the ecclesiastical corruptions and abuses, he had shown, to demonstration, that great and continued successes had in no degree disposed him to be remiss; and he now stood forward to prove, that notwithstanding the late untoward events and the magnitude of the impending danger, he was neither depressed by a reverse of circumstances, nor intimidated by the menaces of an arm of flesh, nor worn out by the length and obstinacy of the contention. In effect, this champion of Evangelical truth always looked on the conflict in which he was engaged, as the proper concern of Almighty God, and on him-

self as a mere instrument in the righteous cause. His mind, deeply impressed with this conviction, remained serene and cheerful, and as vigorous as ever, for new attacks on Antichrist, and for new combats with his unblushing advocates. He exhorted the princes never to abandon the great truths they had undertaken to support; and at the same time he comforted his dejected friends, and employed much time in private prayer. At no period of his life was the weight and influence of Martin Luther more conspicuous than in 1530, when the religious differences seemed tending to an awful crisis. His fortitude was invincible; his zeal courageous and disinterested; and happily they both were tempered by an extraordinary degree of rational and fervent piety *.

* One of Melancthon's correspondents describes Luther thus: "I cannot enough admire the extraordinary cheerfulness, constancy, faith and hope of this man, in these trying and vexatious times. He constantly feeds these good affections by a very diligent study of the Word of God. Then, not a day passes in which he does not employ in prayer at least three of his very best hours. Once I happened to hear him at prayer. Gracious God! What spirit and what faith there is in his expressions! He petitions God with as much reverence as if he was actually in the Divine Presence; and yet with as firm a hope and confidence, as he would address a father or a friend. 'I know,' said he, 'thou art our father and our God: therefore I am sure thou wilt bring to nought the persecutors of thy children. For shouldest thou fail to do this, thine own cause, being connected with ours, would be endangered. It is entirely thine own concern: We, by thy Providence, have been compelled to take a part. Thou therefore wilt be our defence!'

"While I was listening to Luther praying in this manner at a distance, my soul seemed on fire within me, to hear the man address God so like a friend, and yet with so much gravity and reverence; and also to hear him in the course of his prayer insisting on the promises contained in the Psalms, as if he was sure his petitions would be granted." Cœlest. I. 275. Com. de Luth. LXIX. 3.

The Papal historian, Maimbourg, is so well convinced of Luther's great influence about the year 1530, that he breaks out in a rage in the following manner. "I will speak freely

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what I think. Charles V. was to blame that he did not order Luther to be seized, when he talked so audaciously before him at Worms. However, he may be excused on account of the SAFE CONDUCT he had granted him. But at Augsburg he ought to have compelled the elector of Saxony to give him up to justice, and no longer to protect a rebel, who was then proscribed by an Imperial edict, and YET continued writing insolent tracts against the Emperor himself. It was this neglect on the part of Charles, which defeated all his endeavours to produce an agreement between the parties." Maimb. p. 180.

APPENDIX.

FREDERIC MYCONIUS,

OF LICHTENFELD, IN FRANCONIA. page 23.

At the age of sixteen, he entered the monastery of Annaberg; and, by Popish austerities and hard study for the space of seven years, was much reduced in bodily strength. About this time, Tetzel, the impudent vender of indulgences, came into Germany, and Myconius requested he might have one of them gratis, on the score of his poverty, and agreeably to the Pope's letters. Tetzel refused; Myconius pressed the point with great spirit, but could not make the least impression on the infamous and hardened popish agent. Fr. Myconius.

Myconius went into holy orders in the year 1516, preached at Weimar, was confirmed in the truth by Luther's writings, and ever after opposed the corruptions of Popery. He exerted himself in preserving tranquillity at the time of the tumults of the rustics*; and afterwards displayed so much integrity, learning, and talents for business, that when Henry VIII. abolished the papal authority, he was sent into England to confer with the leading Protestants on ecclesiastical subjects. In 1541 he was brought, by a consumption, to the very edge of the grave; in which state Luther wrote to him so warm and affectionate a letter, and prayed for his life so vehemently, that Myconius himself attributed his recovery, and the lengthening of his life for six years, to

* Page 203.

Fr. Myconius. the friendship and the supplications of Luther. He said, there was something so refreshing to him in Luther's letter, that he seemed, as it were, plainly to hear Christ call out, "Lazarus, come forth *."

LEO X. page 30.

Persons of an elegant taste, and of loose morals, who are sceptics in religion, and lovers of learning, will always be most disposed to treat this character with tenderness. However, all attempts to prove Leo a religious man are sure to fail: his religion consisted solely in promoting the opulence and grandeur of the Roman See. It may be allowed that he protected learned men; but his unconquerable indolence, and his habits of luxury and pleasure, forbid us to believe that he himself could possibly have been learned.

Whatever might be his skill in judging of men's proficiency in the fine arts, there is no doubt that he encouraged them; and, as his situation must have exposed him to much adulation, he may possibly have been made to fancy that he had taste and knowledge in many subjects, when in reality he had not much either of the one or of the other.

BUGENHAGIUS. page 49.

He was a celebrated schoolmaster at Treptow in Pomerania, and hence he is often called Pomeranus.

When Luther's treatise on the Babylonish Captivity came out in 1521, and he had read only a few pages of it, he said, "The author of this book is the most pestilent heretic that ever infested the

* Melch. Ad.

Church of Christ." After a few days' close attention to the work, he ingenuously recanted his opinion, in the following strong terms: "The whole world is blind, and this man alone sees the truth." Bugenhagius.

During many years he had been much given to prayer and the study of the Scriptures. At the age of thirty-six he came to Wittemberg, was chosen parochial minister of the great church, and with much piety and usefulness discharged the duties of his station for thirty-six years. He always opposed the violent and seditious practices of Carolstadt, and lived on the most friendly terms with Luther and Melancthon *.

At first he thought Luther had been too violent in his answer to Henry VIII. †; but he changed his opinion, and declared that the author had used the English monarch with too much lenity. "I am convinced," says he, "the Holy Ghost is with Luther; he is a man of an honest, holy, firm, and invincible spirit ‡."

GABRIEL. page 81.

A zealous preacher of the Gospel, who had joined in some of the tumults raised by Carolstadt; but on his repentance, and promises to abstain from innovations, was recommended by Luther to be the minister of Altenburg. The popish clergy there would not bear the man, and the timid elector did not dare to support him. "I know the prince's reason," said Luther; "we are yet in the flesh, and are frightened where there is nothing to fear. Let the prince and his courtiers see to it—I shall not oppose the Holy Spirit. My judgment is clear, that Gabriel ought not to be removed. And

* Melch. Ad. † P. 27. ‡ Selnec. in S. I. 189.

Gabriel. I am also equally clear against supporting him by force*."

To Gabriel himself, Luther wrote thus: "I cannot say your letter pleased me. There was in it a degree of spiritual presumption. Do not boast of your readiness to do and to suffer for the Gospel. Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. You have not yet had to contend with death. It is easier to talk than to do. How many fall away! How few stand! Walk in fear; distrust yourself: leave all to Christ. Preach faith and charity. The people are all prone to trust in externals. Do you lead them to prove by their fruits that they are branches of OUR VINE†."

EMSER. page 84.

Jerome Emser was one of the most early and bitter adversaries of Luther. He invited him to meet several persons at supper. Luther at first supposed himself to be among friends, but soon found there was an insidious plan laid to draw him to speak freely against the notions of Thomas Aquinas. This happened at Dresden, in January 1518, and afforded a handle for calumniators at the court of Duke George. Emser was one of the counsellors of this prince, and a professor of the canon laws at Leipsic. He paid little regard to truth; but never ceased snarling at Luther. His books are now food for moths in the libraries of some papists‡.

SICKINGEN AND CRONEBERG. page 96.

Francis Sickingen, a powerful knight on the banks of the Rhine, who offered protection to Luther

* Ep. II. 80. † Ep. II. 62. ‡ Com. de Luth. CXXVII.

in the year 1520 *. He is one of those alluded to in cap. v. cent. xvi. Sickingen & Croneberg.

It is not so clear that he was a humble Christian, as it is, that he had a high military spirit, and that, in defence of certain rights which he supposed to be violated, he attacked the archbishop of Treves with a large body of cavalry and infantry. In the end, his own castle was stormed, and himself mortally wounded †.

Hartmuth of Croneberg was the son-in-law of Sickingen; and though involved in the military proceedings of his father-in-law, he appears to have been truly pious. In 1522 he wrote to the Pope Adrian in defence of the Reformation; and also exhorted the Imperial regency to promote the good cause. He would willingly, he said, be cut to pieces, provided the reception of the Gospel might be the consequence of his death ‡.

The violent measures of Sickingen afforded the papal party an occasion of calumniating the reformers as turbulent and seditious; but the points in dispute had nothing to do with religion. Croneberg, from his connexion with Sickingen, suffered grievously in his temporal concerns, but remained firm in the faith. Luther wrote to him an admirable consolatory letter §.

Beausobre has confounded this part of the history, by mistaking Croneberg for Sickingen ‖.

ADRIAN's BRIEVE,

IN 1522, TO THE ELECTOR OF SAXONY. page 113.

"Beloved in Christ.—We have borne enough, and more than enough. Our predecessor admo-

* Com. de Luth. LXXI. † Ibid. CL.
‡ Ibid. CL. CXLVII. 6. CXXXII. 5. Seck. Ad. II. 225.
§ Ep. II. 100, 126. ‖ Ibid. II. 270.

Adrian's Brieve.

nished you to have nothing more to do with that mischievous Luther, and we hoped you would have repented.

"Our piety and paternal love for you and your subjects, induce us to exhort you once more to repent, before you become reprobate silver, and the Lord reject you *.

"And what shall we say—Who hath bewitched you! You did run well.—Lift up your eyes, beloved son, and see how you are fallen.

"Is it not enough, that the Christian states should have bloody contests with one another, but you also must nourish a serpent in your bosom, who with the poison of his tongue, a poison worse than that of hell, has destroyed so many myriads of souls?

"All this desertion from the Church, and all this reviling of her sacred usages, is owing to you. It is owing to you that men die in their sins, and are hurried away, unreconciled by penitence, to the terrible tribunal of God. Such are your merits:—I ought rather to say, What punishment do you not deserve?

"But the serpent deceived you.—You are duly rewarded for nourishing the serpent, and for believing him.

"But he produces Scripture—What heretic has not done the same? What diabolical blindness must it be to believe a drunkard and a glutton, rather than the whole world, and so many spiritual fathers! He tells the people, that no man, by fastings, prayers, lamentations, can satisfy an angry God, or redeem his sins;—and that even the Host in the Sacrament is not an offering for sin.

"Be it that you look on him as another Elisha or a Daniel: Does not the spirit of the man appear? Is he not bitter, virulent, arrogant, and abusive? Does he not revile with infamous and abominable

* Jer. vi. 30.

names and blasphemies the successor of St. Peter? And does not the Lord declare, in the book of Deuteronomy *, how he will have his priests to be honoured? And does not Christ say to his preachers, 'He that despiseth you, despiseth me †.' Adrian's Brieve.

"Beloved in Christ, we had hoped that you would not have been among the last to return to the bosom of your mother; but we have been disappointed. You have hardened your face beyond the hardness of a rock. Luther lurks under your protection, and his poison is spreading far and wide. We entreat you, therefore, beloved Son, through the bowels of our Redeemer, that before God's anger shall consume you without remedy, you would pity and help the Church of Christ, oppressed as it now is on all sides, and chiefly by your fault; that you would pity also your country, yourself, and your deluded Saxons. If you repent not, Divine vengeance is at hand, both in this world, and the world to come. Did you never read in the Scriptures of the terrible punishment inflicted on schismatics? Do you know nothing of the case of Dathan Abiram, and Korah: or of king Saul and Uzziah?

"We therefore command and entreat you, beloved Son, to separate yourself from this Martin Luther, and take away this rock of offence. Purge out the old leaven which corrupts the whole mass of your faith ‡. Deign, beloved, to imitate that St. Paul in your conversion, whom you have exceeded in persecuting the Church of God.

"If you listen to our entreaties, as we hope you will, we shall rejoice with the angels over the penitent sinner; and with delight shall carry back on our shoulders the lost sheep of the Lord's sheepfold.

"But if you shall say, We will not walk in the good old paths, We will not hearken; The Lord's

* Deut. xvii. † Luke x. 16. ‡ 1 Cor. v. 7.

Adrian's Brieve.

answer is, I will bring evil upon this people *. And so we denounce against you, on the authority of God and the Lord Christ, whose Vicar we are, that your impenitence shall not pass unpunished in this world; and that in the next world the burning of eternal fire awaits you. Adrian, the Pope, and the very religious Emperor Charles, my dear pupil and Son in Christ, are both alive: you have contemptuously violated his edict against Luther's perfidy; and we, the Pope and Emperor, will not allow the Saxon children of our predecessors to perish through the contagion of heresies and schisms, thus protected by a schismatical and heretical prince. Repent, or expect to feel both the Apostolic and Imperial sword of vengeance †."

OLAUS PETRI. page 133.

Laurentius and Olaus Petri were brothers, who had studied in the college of Wittemberg, and learnt from Luther's own mouth the principles of the Reformation ‡.

It is worthy of notice, that after these reformers had explained to Gustavus the numerous papal abuses, and had obtained his order for a translation of the Bible into the Swedish language,—in imitation of what Luther had done §,—this excellent monarch was so candid and equitable, as to direct the archbishop of Upsal, who was of the popish faction, to prepare another version of the Bible, that there might be no room to say the truth was obstructed ‖.

The substance of Olaus's chapter on Justification is this:

* Jerem. vi. 16—19.

† Labb. Con. XIV. 402.

‡ Baaz. II. p. 150.

‖ Ibid. 151, and 163.

§ Ibid. 205.

" It is impossible that man, being born in sin, should fulfil the law of God. Ol. Petri.

" The first use of the law is, that man may know he is a sinner. The law is his schoolmaster: it teaches him that he is under condemnation, and he becomes ardent in his search after the righteousness of Christ. Then he obtains by faith, from the merit of Christ, what he never could have merited by any works of his own. The sinner is not justified on account of what HE DOES in the way of belief, but because he applies, in the way of acceptance, the righteousness of Christ to himself.

" Good works follow justification. They are not perfect; but they are accepted. When a believer is inclined to think any thing of his works, he will do better to give the glory to God *."

HESSE. page 146.

The senate of Nuremberg, in reply to Adrian's censures, commended their minister, J. Hesse, in the strongest terms. " In him they had found a disinterested pastor, who fed his flock in their lifetime with the incorruptible nourishment of the Divine word; and who buried those that died in the Lord, as a pious clergyman ought to do, and not as his predecessors had done. For they aimed at nothing but gain; and in fact were more greedy in extracting money from the dead, than from the living; and all under the pretence of procuring pardon for sins †."

Luther preserved an affectionate and uninterrupted correspondence with Hesse. In 1522, he tells him to stir up the people to the practice of faith and charity; for that at Wittemberg, they were in a fury to take the Sacrament in both kinds; while at the same time they neglected faith and charity,

* Baaz. XX. p. 250. † Com. de Luth. CLI. 2.

Hesse. which are the two constituent parts of the Christian character.

In 1524, he writes thus: "May the Lord, who has called you to be a preacher, give you strength! That is my way of comforting you. You are in the ship with Christ, What do you expect? Fine weather? Nay—rather winds and waves and tempests, even so that the vessel may begin to sink. Call on Christ for help, for he sometimes sleeps; and then you will have a calm*."

DRACO. page 147.

John Draco took his degree of A. M. at the university of Erfurt, where he was introduced to those learned reformers, Hesse and Camerarius. He became doctor of divinity at Wittemberg.

He published, in 1523, an account of the cruel treatment he had met with at Miltenburg; addressed it to cardinal Albert, and entreated him to deliver from prison his own deacon and some others that were also in confinement. He had taught nothing, he said, but what he would confess at the day of judgment.

Luther's letter to the afflicted people of Miltenburg is full of wisdom and consolation. He applies, verse by verse, the 120th Psalm to their case; and observes that they may well allow him to sympathize with them, because they were persecuted under the name of Lutherans; though, he adds, it always grieved him to hear his doctrine called by the name of Lutheranism, when, in fact, it was the Gospel of God himself.—The letter takes up seventeen quarto pages†.

* Ep. II. p. 240. † Ib. 185. b.

VOES, ESCH, AND LAMBERT. page 148.

The learned writer of their martyrdom tells us, that all means were used to induce them to recant; and he then proceeds to describe what he himself saw at Brussels. On the day fixed for their execution, the youngest of the three was brought first into the market-place; and directed to kneel before a table, covered like a communion-table. Every body fixed their astonished eyes upon him; but he discovered not the least mark of fear or perturbation of mind. His countenance was placid and composed, yet mild and modest; he seemed entirely absorbed in prayers and holy contemplations. While they were stripping him of his sacerdotal dress, he did every thing they ordered him to do with perfect readiness; and when they had thus made him a layman, he retired. Then the two others were produced; and they went through the same ceremonies with a cheerful firmness, as far as one may judge from the countenance. Soon after, one of these, together with the youngest first mentioned, came forward; and the two were led to the fire. At this moment, says the writer,—if they had not been heretics,—one would have owned, that they gave many most decisive proofs of a sound understanding and pious disposition, and of the joy which they experienced on the prospect of being freed from the body and joined to Christ. The fire was slow in kindling, and the martyrs stood almost naked; but showed not the least appearance of languor during this vexatious delay. You will ask, How did they behave when the flames broke out? Their constancy and alacrity certainly increased; and there appeared a cheerfulness, not to be described; insomuch, that many persons thought they saw them smile in the fire. They sang Te Deum in alternate verses, till at length the flame put an end to the scene. The

Voes, Esch, & Lambert.

third was not produced. It was suspected that he was put to death privately.

These men were condemned upon sixty-two articles, which need not be repeated, as they were, in the main, expressive of Luther's doctrine. One of them was, "They had obtained more light into the Scriptures from Luther's writings, than from those of other doctors*."

OSIANDER. page 177.

Andreas Osiander began to preach at Nuremberg in Feb. 1522†, in the character of a reformer: and he is generally numbered among the worthies who contributed to the deliverance of the Church of Christ from the chains of Popery.—He was a studious and an acute divine; but disposed to adopt novel and mystical opinions, and much disliked on account of his pride and arrogance. He shamefully treated the excellent Melancthon in his old age, who bore his insolence with a truly Christian spirit. Osiander, in 1552, died suddenly in Prussia, at a time when he was raising great disturbances among the Lutheran churches‡.

HENRY OF ZUTPHEN. page 216.

The popish clergy were so provoked at the effect of Henry's preaching at Bremen, that they entreated the senate to expel the heretic from their city. Not succeeding in this way, they complained to the bishop; upon which Henry drew up the articles of his belief, sent the formulary to his Ordinary, and declared himself ready to recant any thing which could be proved by Scripture to be heretical.

* Ep. II. 142. † Com. de Luth. CXXXIX. 3.
‡ Melch. Ad.

Instead of receiving an answer, he soon after found the bull of Leo X. and the emperor's edict at Worms affixed to the doors of the church:—— A procedure, the meaning of which could not be mistaken! Henry of Zutphen.

About two years after this, A. D. 1524, Henry was invited to preach the Gospel at Meldorf in Ditmarsia. The people of Bremen entreated him not to leave them; but Henry thought it his duty to obey the call. He said, They had had the Gospel two years at Bremen; whereas the Ditmarsians were in the midst of wolves, and without a shepherd. He could not therefore resist their prayers. A. D. 1524.

Henry was joyfully received at Meldorf. Immediately however, even before he began to preach, the fury of Satan and of his agents broke out. What is to be done? said the Prior of the monastery to his clergy. We shall lose all our authority. We must go to work in a different way from that which our friends pursued at Bremen. To be short, he formed a conspiracy of forty-eight of the principal inhabitants of a neighbouring town; who concurred in the atrocious design of murdering Henry, whom the Prior called "The seditious monk from Bremen." He persuaded them they would thereby effectually gain the favour of the bishop.

The first measure of this wretched combination was to sign an instrument, in which they threatened to fine the Parish of Meldorf 1,000 florins, if they should suffer Henry to preach. But the Meldorfians treated the insolent menace with contempt; and in the mean time Henry persisted in preaching the leading doctrines of the Gospel, and the people received the truth with wonder, joy, and thankfulness.

In the mean time the Prior grew impatient for the death of Henry. He called together his digni-

Henry of Zutphen.

fied brethren, and applied also for assistance to the Franciscan monks, who were peculiarly well qualified for the wicked service in which they were to be employed. The party instantly agreed to lodge complaints before the magistrates concerning the doctrines of Henry; and to declare, that if such a heretic was not put to death, the worship of the Virgin Mary and of the Saints would soon be at an end, and the two monasteries would be pulled down. This was THEIR SCRIPTURAL way of convicting a heretic! One of the magistrates observed, that the preacher and his adherents had already been threatened in a written document; but that, if it was thought expedient, the admonition might be repeated. No, no, replied the Prior;—we must not proceed so in this business: if you admonish the heretic in writing, he will answer you; and you will not get the better of him. Nay, there is danger lest you yourselves should be seized with the heretical contagion. Upon which they all agreed that Henry should be taken by force, and burnt in the night-time, before the university should know any thing of the affair, or the martyr be brought to trial.

To carry this plan into execution, the principal actors contrived to collect together in the evening, after it was dark, above five hundred rustics from the villages, whose minds, at first averse from so scandalous a transaction, they stirred up to the perpetration of it, partly by threats, and partly by the stimulus of several hogsheads of Hamburg ale. The clergy led the way with lighted torches. Then an armed body of men came to Meldorf about midnight, and made their first attack upon a parishioner who was Henry's principal supporter. They hauled him by the hair of his head, and rolled him naked in the dirt. After this, they seized Henry himself, and dragged him, till, from fatigue, and from his feet being cut with sharp pieces of ice, he could no longer walk.

One of the magistrates of this scene of barbarity asked the martyr, Whether he would rather choose to receive his due there at Meldorf, or be sent to the bishop of Bremen. "If," said Henry, "I have preached false doctrine, or committed any crime, they have me now in their power."——"He would rather die here," cried the manager; and then the multitude, who were heated with strong liquor, shouted aloud, Burn him! burn him! And thus this good man was condemned to the flames, without any previous hearing. Henry of Zutphen.

When brought to the pile of wood, Henry lifted up his hands to heaven, and said, "Forgive them, O Lord, they know not the sin they are committing." A lady of Meldorf was so much affected with the sight of this tragedy, that she offered one thousand florins to the mob, on condition that they would take Henry to prison, and remove him to an impartial trial. Instantly they trampled the lady under their feet, fell upon Henry with clubs, and beat him without mercy.

Almost two hours were spent before the fire could be made to burn, during all which time the barbarous rustics continued either to beat the martyr, or to thrust all kinds of instruments into his back, his sides, and his arms. At last they tied his body to a long ladder; and when he was beginning to pray, they forced his neck with a cord so close to one of the steps of the ladder, that the blood flowed plentifully from his mouth and nose. Their object throughout was, to prevent him from being heard either to speak or to pray. They now endeavoured to place the ladder almost upright, with Henry thus fastened to it; but in their attempt to support it by a sharp-pointed pole, they missed their aim; and the good man fell upon the sharp pole, which pierced his body through, and put an end to his sufferings. The barbarians cast his remains into the fire: and one of them snatched up a club and

Henry of Zutphen. beat his breast with hard blows as long as he could perceive him to breathe *.

ADRIAN TO ERASMUS. page 259.

The letter is in substance as follows:

"Beloved Son,

"Do not be uneasy because calumny has represented you as belonging to the Lutheran faction. We do not listen to malignant insinuations against learned and good men. We entreat you, however, out of regard to your own reputation, to take up your pen against these novel heresies. God has bestowed on you a great genius, and a happy turn for writing; and it is your duty to use your gifts in support of the Church. In that way you will best silence the reports of your being a Lutheran. Hitherto, by your writings, you have adorned every branch of learning; and now, when your faculties are ripened and confirmed, you are called upon by the whole Christian world to exert yourself against the insidious attacks of heretics. Modesty inclines you to suppose you are unequal to the task; but every one knows the contrary: moreover, you have truth on your side, and God will not fail to help you.—Then rouse, rouse yourself in the cause of God: Employ your talents in his service. Come cheerfully to Rome, as soon as the winter is over. Here you will have the advantage of books and of learned men; and we will take care, and soon too, that you shall not repent of your journey, or of the holy cause in which you engage. Our beloved Son, Faber, will explain my meaning more at length." —Dec. 1, 1522.†

* Ep. II. 252. b. † Eras. p. 735.

Erasmus, by his answer, on Dec. 22, showed that he would not be behind the Pope in compliments. He said, "The world looked to his Holiness alone for the restoration of peace and tranquillity in the Church. The danger was imminent; nevertheless, if a person of no rank might be permitted to speak, he himself would venture to communicate SECRETLY such advice as would put an end to all the dissensions. Then no harm could ensue from what he had to propose, because the secret would be in the possession of nobody but the Pope and himself*." Adrian to Erasmus.

Adrian's answer, in the succeeding January 23, is full of the same sort of compliments as those in his former letter. He adds, moreover, that if ever he had entertained any suspicion of the integrity of Erasmus, it was now completely done away, by that piety, zeal, and respect for the Roman See, which his last letter breathed throughout.

He then entreats Erasmus to communicate his SECRET with all possible expedition. "There was nothing," he said, "under the sun, which he more ardently wished for, than the extinction of the present evils in the Church†."

At length, with much parade, the SECRET ADVICE of Erasmus is disclosed to the Pope, in an elaborate letter of several folio pages. After boasting of his own moderation, and of the proofs he had given that he was no Lutheran, he intimates, that if he had been of a factious turn of mind, or disposed to give way to solicitations, he could have done irreparable mischief to the established hierarchy; and he adds, that the requital which he had met with was such as tended to alienate the mind of any orthodox person, and make him a heretic. But, says he, you will ask me, To what purpose are these complaints, when I am expecting to hear your advice? "Part of my advice," Erasmus answers, "is implied in what I have already said." And he then

* Eras. p. 737. † Ibid. p. 744.

Adrian to Erasmus.

discloses the remainder of his secret, in terms to this effect:

1. This evil is not to be cured by fire and sword. I do not say what the heretics deserve, but what is expedient to be done.

2. Some concessions ought to be made.

3. The causes of the evils should be investigated, and proper remedies applied, with an amnesty for the past.

4. The licentiousness of the press should be restrained.

5. Hopes should be given that certain grievances will be redressed. Men will breathe freely at the sweet name of liberty.

6. To settle these points, there should be called together, from different nations, men of integrity, ability, and cool judgment, whose opinion ———

Here Erasmus breaks off in the middle of a sentence: he probably did so on purpose, though he pretends to have wanted time. His letter is without date*.

The Pope and his Cardinals, no doubt, disliked the advice.

LUTHER'S LETTER TO ERASMUS.

page 268.

He begins in the Apostolical manner: Grace and peace to you from the Lord Jesus.

"I shall not complain of you," says he, "for having behaved yourself as a man estranged from us, to keep fair with the Papists, my enemies. Nor was I much offended, that in your printed books, to gain their favour, or to soften their rage, you have censured us with too much acrimony. We saw that the Lord had not conferred upon you the discernment, the courage, and the resolution to join

* Eras. 745.

with us, and freely and openly to oppose those monsters; and therefore we dared not to exact from you that which surpasses your strength and your capacity. We have even borne with your weakness, and honoured that portion of the gift of God which is in you. Luther's Letter to Erasmus.

"The whole world must own with gratitude your great talents and services in the cause of literature, through the revival of which, we are enabled to read the Sacred Scriptures in their originals.

"I never wished that, forsaking or neglecting your own proper talents, you should enter into our camp. You might indeed have favoured us not a little by your wit, and by your eloquence; but forasmuch as you have not that courage which is requisite, it is safer for you to serve the Lord in your own way. Only we feared, lest our adversaries should entice you to write against us, and that necessity should then constrain us to oppose you to your face. We have withheld some persons amongst us, who were disposed and prepared to attack you; and I could have wished that the COMPLAINT of Hutten had never been published, and still more that your SPONGIA in answer to it had never come forth; by which you may at present, if I mistake not, see and feel how easy it is to say fine things about the duties of modesty and moderation, and to accuse Luther of wanting them; and how difficult and even impossible it is to be really modest and moderate, without a particular gift of the Holy Spirit. Believe me, or believe me not, Jesus Christ is my witness, that I am concerned as well as you, that the resentment and hatred of so many eminent persons hath been excited against you. I must suppose that this gives you no small uneasiness; for virtue like yours, mere human virtue, cannot raise a man above being affected by such trials. To tell you freely what I think, there are persons who, having this weakness also about them, cannot bear, as they ought, your

Luther's Letter to Erasmus.

acrimony and your dissimulation, which you want to pass off for prudence and modesty. These men have cause to be offended; and yet would not be offended, if they possessed greater magnanimity. Although I also am irascible, and have been often provoked so as to use an asperity of style, yet I never acted thus, except against hardened and incurable reprobates; nay, some offenders even of this stamp, it is well known, have been treated by me with clemency and gentleness. Hitherto then, though you have provoked me, I have restrained myself; and I promised my friends, in letters which you have seen, that I would continue to do so, unless you should appear openly against us. For although you are not in our sentiments, and many pious doctrines are condemned by you with irreligion or dissimulation, or treated in a sceptical manner, yet I neither can nor will ascribe a stubborn perverseness to you. What can I do now? Things are exasperated on both sides; and I could wish, if I might be allowed to act the part of a mediator, that they would cease to attack you with such animosity, and suffer your old age to rest in peace in the Lord; and thus they would conduct themselves, in my opinion, if they either considered your weakness, or the magnitude of the controverted cause, which hath been long since beyond your capacity. They would show their moderation towards you so much the more, since our affairs are advanced to such a point, that our cause is in no peril, although even Erasmus should attack it with all his might; so far are we from fearing any of his strokes and strictures. On the other hand, my dear Erasmus, if you duly reflect upon your own imbecility, you will abstain from those sharp and spiteful figures of rhetoric; and if you cannot or will not defend our sentiments, you will let them alone, and treat of subjects which suit you better, Our friends, even you yourself must own, have some reason to be out of humour at being

lashed by you; because human infirmity thinks of the authority and reputation of Erasmus, and fears it: and indeed there is much difference between him and the rest of the Papists. He alone is a more formidable adversary than all of them joined together. Luther's Letter to Erasmus.

"My prayer is, that the Lord may bestow on you a spirit worthy of your great reputation; but if this be not granted, I entreat you, if you cannot help us, to remain at least a spectator of our severe conflict, and not to join our adversaries; and in particular not to write tracts against us: on which condition I will not publish against you."

MELANCTHON's COMMON-PLACES: page 331.

The learned author refers his reader to many parts of Scripture.

E. g. to Rom. xi. 36.
Ephes. i. 11.
Matt. x. 29.
Prov. xvi. 4.
—— xx. 24.
Jerem. x. 23.
Gen. xv. 16.
1 Sam. ii. 25.
—— ix. 1.—16.
—— x. 26.
1 Kings xii. 15.
Rom. ix. 15.
Eccles. viii. 16. 17.

Some other things contained in this performance may be referred to with advantage on a future occasion. Vide Von dor Hardt. IV. 30.

JOHN DE BACKER. page 381.

The charges brought against this good man were,

1. That he had spoken lightly of papal indulgences.
2. That he had neglected to celebrate the mass.
3. That he had married a wife*.

* Scult. 318.

John de Backer.

On his examination, he boldly maintained, that no man ought to submit to any other rule of faith than what was expressed in the Holy Bible; and that God allowed a chaste and honourable marriage, which however the governors of the Church refused to tolerate. At the same time, he put the court in mind how the fornication of the priests was every day connived at, or forgiven; then repeated, and forgiven again and again.

At his trial, the president used some expressions too indecent to be mentioned; and in particular, "He wished," he said, "the poor man had lived with ten harlots, rather than that he should have married, and given the court all this trouble." This declaration affected the audience with horror.

The father of Backer addressed his son thus: "Be strong, and persevere: I am content, like Abraham, to offer up to God my dearest child that never offended me."

As the martyr passed the prison in his way to execution, he said, "Courage, my dear brethren. From my example have courage, like brave soldiers of Christ." The prisoners answered him with a shout of joy, clapping of hands, and singing of Te Deum. At the stake he cried, "O death, where is thy sting!" His last words were, "Lord Jesus forgive them, for they know not what they do;—and have mercy on me*!"

* Brandt. 53.

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

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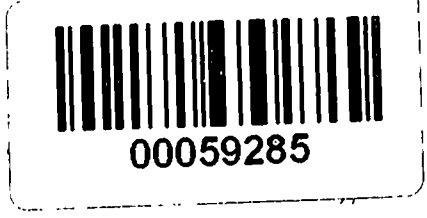
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